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S. D. BUTCHER'S

# PIONFER HISTORY OF CUSTER COUNTY

AND SHORT  
SKETCHES OF EARLY DAYS  
IN NEBRASKA



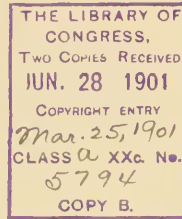
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BROKEN BOW, NEBRASKA

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## Dedication.

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To the Pioneers of Custer County, that noble band of men and women who blazed a pathway into the wilderness, who battled against the elements and subdued the forces of Nature in order that the blessings of civilization and enlightenment might be established in this portion of the Great American Desert, this work is respectfully dedicated.

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# Index.

	Page.
Dedication .....	2
Preface .....	3
An Ode to Custer County .....	5
Organization of Custer County .....	7
Cattle Industry in Ranch Days .....	17
Old Settler's Story .....	31
The Mitchell and Ketchum Tragedy .....	43
Blazing a Pathway and Personal Pioneer Experiences .....	63
Jess Gandy's Reminiscences of Early Days in Custer County, Neb. ....	81
Hunting Buffalo on the Great Plains .....	85
Held Up by Jack Nolan .....	93
Judge William Gaslin .....	108
Settlement of New Helena .....	113
Exploits of Dick Milton .....	119
The Coyote .....	133
Search for the Silver Medal .....	135
An Old Settler's Story .....	143
The Killing of Two Cowboys at Anselmo .....	154
The Province Tragedy .....	160
A Cowboy's Story .....	167
Playing Dick Milton .....	172
Brighton Ranch .....	176
Freezing of Trapper in Powell Canon .....	182
Tearing Down of Settler's Houses by Cowboys .....	185
Tailing Up a Texas Cow .....	186
Clear Creek .....	188
History of Broken Bow .....	189
Shooting of John Sanderson .....	208
We Now Cross the Custer County Line .....	208
Westerville .....	214
Hunting Wild Horses .....	218
Lynching of Kid Wade in 1884 .....	221
Douglass Grove Township .....	232
Incidents of Douglass Grove .....	238
Lee's Park .....	242
West Union Precinct .....	246
The Haunstine Tragedy .....	253
Mike O'Rafferty as a Cowboy .....	263
Callaway .....	271

	Page.
Ansley .....	285
Sargent .....	295
Early Experiences in Sargent Precinct.....	298
Pioneer Settlement of Sargent.....	301
Anselmo .....	306
Killing of Arnold and Capture of Bohannon.....	311
Terrible Fall in a Deep Well ..	314
Redfern Table.....	317
Early Settlers West of Broken Bow.....	323
Calloway Protestant Episcopal Church .....	325
Mason City .....	327
Arnold.....	335
Settlement of Cliff Table .....	336
Dead Man's Canon .....	337
Oconto .....	338
Comstock .....	339
Settlement of Dale Valley.....	342
St. Andrew's Catholic Church, Dale .....	344
Rev. Thomas P. Haley .....	347
How Custer Center Church Was Built .....	349
Christian Church, Broken Bow.....	350
Church of God... ..	352
Sunday Schools in Custer County.....	354
Lone Star Sunday School.....	357
Some Early Sunday Schools .....	358
United Brethren in Christ.....	359
Newspapers of Custer County.....	360
Lillian Township.....	365
Lillian Precinct.....	368
Hogs on the Ranch.....	371
Arkansas Bob in the Well.....	373
Settlement of Georgetown.....	375
Winter of 1880 on the South Loup.....	380
Spencer Park.....	382
Methodist Church, Calloway.....	384
Custer County Agricultural Society.....	387
The Oxley Trial.....	389
Irrigation in Custer County .....	391
The Dairying Industry.....	392
Swine Raising.....	394
Raising Horses for Profit.....	396
Douglas Grove Irrigation Ditch.....	397
A Trip Through the Sand Hills.....	399
Advertisements—	
Union Pacific Railroad,	
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.	
Union Stock Yards, Omaha.	

## Preface.

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To My Friends and Patrons:

As you turn the pages of this book and see the familiar landmarks of former years, you will begin to appreciate the endeavors of the man who, for fifteen years, has labored against many difficulties, and is at last able to place in your hands a truthful history of pioneer life in Custer county. It will be doubly interesting to many of you, because you have helped supply the material from which it is made, while new arrivals will read with interest these anecdotes and reminiscences and short, thrilling stories of the founders of this county, their many trials and hardships endured while braving the elements in the howling blizzards of winter, the scorching suns of the drought period and devastation by grasshoppers. All tend to make it a most remarkable book, and every one will have the satisfaction of knowing he is reading truth and not following the wild imagination of the novelist.

We make no apology in placing this book before the public. We have tried honestly to get facts from every source possible. If we have failed to do so in some cases, it has been the fault of our informants and not intentional on our part. We submit it just as it is, and it must stand or fall on its merits as a historical production. We have in some cases used fictitious names, where we thought proper to do so, as it would not detract materially from the interest of the history. The old pioneers will have no difficulty in following the career of noted characters as well under one name as another. While we must, as a true historian, chronicle Custer county's history, we do not care to give a man who may be trying to live honestly and atone for past misdeeds undue notoriety by disclosing his true name.

We thank those gentlemen who have kindly furnished us articles over their own signatures, besides the many pioneers who have furnished us manuscript to be boiled down and which is made the foundation on which our history rests. And last, but not least, we wish to thank the man who has come to our aid financially, when the clouds seemed to be blackest and most gloomy, and our book had again almost come to a standstill for want of means

to push it to success. How glad it made our heart when Uncle Swain Finch said: "Butch, you have worked faithfully and deserve success, and if the people of Custer county want a history, by George, they shall have it." May the name of E. S. Finch be handed down to generations yet unborn as a great philanthropist—one of God's noblemen—who just "grewed" like Topsy.

If, in looking over the pages of this book, you find a fuller description of some other portion of the county than of your own, pause before criticising the historian and ask if it is not your own fault that you are not more fully represented. If you have done any great deeds in Custer county which are worthy to go down in history, was it not your duty to have them recorded?

In conclusion, I wish also to express my obligations to George B. Mair, editor of the Callaway Courier, for valuable assistance rendered through his paper, and as editor and compiler of the manuscript, rough notes and sketches collected by me for this work.

Yours respectfully,

S. D. BUTCHER.





# An Ode to Custer County.

MRS. C. H. CARLOS.

We praise, thee, fair Custer county,  
Whose fame is often sung,  
Whose story of dearth and bounty  
Is told in every tongue;  
Whose hills like infant mountains rise  
Twixt canons dark and deep,  
Where, glinting 'neath the bluest skies,  
Wild rushing torrents sweep;  
Where tiny streams in silence wend  
Their way thro' valleys green,  
Where sun and shade their powers lend  
To beautify the scene.

Land where fierce roaring blizzards hide  
And cyclones find a home,  
Where soft winds stray o'er prairies wide,  
And zephyrs gently roam;  
Where nature dwells in calm or storm,  
In shade, or sunshine fair,  
In genial climate mild and warm,  
In pure, health-giving air;  
Where hills, and streams, and valleys ring  
With the same unending story,  
And every breeze comes whispering  
Of Custer county's glory.

They tell of wealth that lightly sleeps  
Within thy fertile soil,  
Which into life and being leaps,  
Touched by the hand of toil;  
They tell of a wide open door,  
In a fair, fruitful land,  
Where, beck'ning to the lowly poor,  
Health, peace and comfort stand.  
They send a message to mankind,  
An offering of bounty,  
Bidding him come and welcome find  
In glorious Custer county.

Be thy worth told in thunder's voice,  
Or zephyr's softest strain,  
Still will the heart of man rejoice  
And join the sweet refrain.  
Then let us now our voices raise  
And help to swell the sound;  
We'll sing thy merits and thy praise  
Till all the hills resound.

We praise thee for each changing scene,  
And for thy endless bounty;  
We crown thee now Northwestern Queen  
O, fairest Custer county.

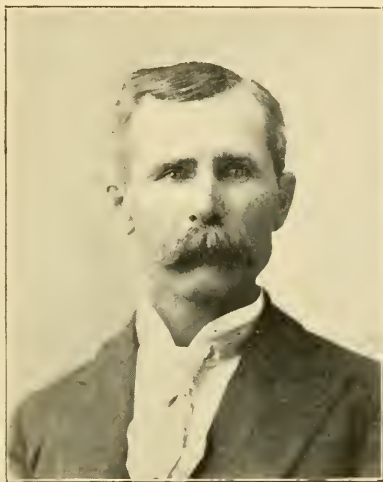


*Yours Truly*  
*S. D. Butcher*

## Organization of Custer County.

J. J. DOUGLASS.

In undertaking to write an article upon the early settlement and organization of Custer county, I realize my inability to do the matter justice; but as one of the earliest settlers, I may be able to say a word or two that will be of interest to the reader. Those who have grown to manhood and womanhood since the county was organized have but a faint idea of the hardships



J. J. DOUGLASS



MRS. J. J. DOUGLASS

and trials that were endured and overcome by those who blazed the way for others to follow and reap the benefit. The early settlers of Custer county had not only to battle against the hungry "wolf at the door," but they had to measure swords with the Indian and the cowboy as well. The early history of the county is a record of bloodshed and murder—so much so, in fact, that the term, "dark and bloody ground," applied to the state of Kentucky, would not be less appropriate for Custer county.

This portion of the state, as is well known, abounds in nutritious grasses, is well watered with numerous streams, many of them fed by springs, making

it a perfect paradise for cattlemen as a range for their vast herds. On a regular cow ranch you never found any women. They would always have a man to do the cooking, and I must say that some of the ranch cooks understood their business and could get up a repast fit for a king—a cattle king at that. Ranchmen, like miners, coal diggers, etc., were clannish to a degree, and while they were liberal and generous to a fault among themselves, if an outsider stepped in and attempted to interfere in any of their matters a quietus was quickly put on him. As the saying is: they were always ready to fight for each other. Many laughable incidents would often occur, especially on the spring round-up, when all hands turned out with horses, grub wagon, blankets, and all the other appurtenances of ranch life, to be gone generally about six weeks, traveling over hundreds of miles of country and enjoying the freedom of a life on the plains. While there was any amount of hard work to do, yet the boys always found time for having sport. Their failing was often a love for firewater, which they no doubt inherited from the aborigines who had preceded them as lords of the domain, and consequently it was quite natural that they should always be looking around for "a wee drap o' the crayther." In the spring of 1876, while camped at Burr Oak, a Mr. Wood came into camp with a load of provisions for a stage station on the Middle Loup river, about sixty miles above the mouth of the Dismal river. In those days they hauled everything from Kearney into that upper country along the old stage line to the Black Hills. During the night the boys concluded they would inspect the old man's load and see what it contained, when they discovered a five-gallon keg of whisky. They immediately confiscated the liquor and set 'em up to the whole round-up. The reader can easily guess the rest. Several of the boys took a day's lay-off, the better to enjoy the spree, and everybody was happy.

Each outfit would have some man who was an expert in some particular line, and challenges would be passed from one to the other and much money put up as wagers. The cowboys, as a general thing, were averse to hoarding money, and next to earning it, their chief concern was how and where to spend it. Yet these rough and big-hearted fellows were not all toughs. Many of them were men of education, refinement and high attainments in many lines. Some of them have since been able and useful members of the Legislature, while many others have become noted in other directions. Colonel Cody, Major North, Buck Taylor, John Shores and others I could name, who were cowpunchers at the time I write, have since attained national if not world-wide fame. Speaking of Major North reminds me that he had a sorrel horse that was a winner, especially when ridden by the major himself. He said he could get more run out of the horse than any one else, and when the horse was put up

for a race the major always insisted upon riding it himself. He was an interesting character, always wore the old-fashioned leggings, like our grandfathers wore—away above his knees—a broad-brimmed white hat, a hackamore on his horse in place of a bridle, and invariably carried a small Indian quirt. He was a noted Indian fighter and commanded the Pawnees in several of their campaigns against their hereditary enemies, the Sioux. Buffalo Bill was another character who has since become known the world over. He was a liberal fellow, never cared to lay up money, said he always believed in keeping it in circulation, always carried plenty to drink and smoke, and quite frequently set 'em up to the round-up. One spring, seeing that he was going to run short of liquor, he sent his wagon to North Platte to replenish the store. On the way to the Platte the team becoming tired out, the boys saw a pair of stray mules not far distant, caught them and hitched them to the wagon. On their return they were met by Dan Haskell and Jim Harris, who pretended the mules belonged to them, and that they had been hunting for them. They represented that the mules had strayed away from their ranch near the Dismal, and let on they were very angry because the boys had caught them and were using them. They threatened to have the boys arrested for stealing the mules, and the young fellows, in order to placate Dan and Jim, and avoid further trouble, gave them all the whisky they could drink out of Buffalo Bill's keg, and supplied them with cigars enough to last them a week.

For years in the '70's an old feud existed in Texas between the Olives and another outfit engaged in the ranging of cattle. This feud became hotter and hotter, until in the summer of 1876 it came to a head. While the Olives were branding and rounding up cattle the other outfit came up on them in the night while they were asleep on the ground near the ranch and opened fire on the Olives and their men with guns loaded with buckshot. The Olive outfit got their guns as quickly as possible and stood the enemy a stiff fight in the darkness. The result was one of the Olive boys was killed and one of their men, named Butler, was severely wounded. The cattle were turned out of the corral and the ranch house set on fire. In 1877 the Olives moved their vast herds, consisting of about 15,000 head of cattle, to the Dismal river in Nebraska. They kept them there one winter and in 1878 opened up their South Loup ranch on a school section about four miles down the river from the present site of Callaway.

At the time of which I have been writing this was unorganized territory. Custer county had not yet come into existence, and Broken Bow, Callaway, Ansley and the other towns with which we are now so familiar, had not even been dreamed of. It was thought by the cattlemen that this country would never be settled up, but would forever remain a range for cattle. It may be



proper to say here that property in the unorganized territory was assessed and taxed by the next county to the east of it. As the taxes collected were expended in the improvement of the county by which they were collected, the cattlemen of this territory concluded that it would be a good thing to have a big cattle county organized, so that they could get some benefit out of any taxes they might pay, and be better able to protect themselves against cattle thieves and other lawless men who infested the country. Several attempts had been made to organize a county out of this territory, an account of which will be found in other articles in this book, but it was not until the year 1877 that the present county was formed. In the Legislature of 1877 the Hon. J. H. MacColl of Plum Creek introduced the following bill, which was passed and received the signature of Governor Garber:

An Act to Define the Boundaries of Custer County.

Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Nebraska:

Section 1. That all that portion of the state of Nebraska commencing at the southeast corner of township thirteen (13), north of range seventeen (17), west of the sixth principal meridian, thence north to the northeast corner of township twenty (20), north of range seventeen (17), west, thence west to the northwest corner of township twenty (20), north of range twenty-five west, thence south to the southwest corner of township thirteen (13), north of range twenty-five (25) west, thence east to place of beginning, shall constitute the county of Custer.

Approved February 17, 1877.

The writer does not know who is entitled to the distinction of naming the new county, but it was named "Custer" in honor of the gallant Indian fighter who perished with all his command at the memorable battle on the Little Big Horn the summer previous.

In May a petition was sent to Governor Garber, signed by most of the cattlemen of the county, asking for the appointment of temporary officers to complete the organization of the county, as follows:

To the Honorable Silas Garber, Governor of the State of Nebraska:

We, the undersigned, inhabitants of Custer county, Nebraska, and taxpayers therein, petition you to appoint and commission James Gasmann, Anton Abel and H. C. Stuckey as special county commissioners, and Frank H. Young as special county clerk of said county for the purpose of forming a permanent organization for said county, and that you will appoint and declare the southeast quarter of section 23, in township 15 north, range 22 west, as the temporary county seat of said county, and for this we will ever pray.

(Signed) Frank H. Young, M. F. Young, James G. Gasmann, W. T. H. Tucker, H. C. Stuckey, Denman Fritt, Phil Dufrand, Anton Abel, E. J. Boblits, James Paxton, A. H. Wise, T. M. Jameson, Reginald McKee, Emmett V. Filer, Nate Fuller, J. J. Douglass, P. W. O'Brien, A. B. Bradney, W. W. Wattles, I. O. Child, W. H. Kilgore, Joshua Wood, S. C. Stuckey, Louis Wambsgan.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, }  
County of Dawson, } ss.

Personally appeared before me, a notary public in and for Dawson county, Nebraska, James P. Paxton, Frank H. Young and James Gasmann, who, being duly sworn, depose and say that they are resident freeholders in the county of Custer and state of Nebraska, that such county contains a population of not less than 200 inhabitants, and that ten or more of such inhabitants are taxpayers, and further they say not.

JAMES P. PAXTON,  
FRANK H. YOUNG,  
JAMES GASMANN.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of May, 1877.

(Seal)

H. O. SMITH, Notary Public.

The following letters and recommendations from prominent citizens of Dawson county were forwarded with the petition to the governor, and may be interesting as a part of this history:

Office of the Clerk of County and District Courts, Dawson county.

Plum Creek, Neb., June 14, 1877.

His Excellency, Silas Garber, Lincoln, Neb.:

Dear Sir—Several of the citizens of Custer county have been speaking to me about the organization of that county and desire me to write to you about the matter. There is quite a large amount of personal property owned by the citizens of that territory, and under the present status it is under the control of no one. One-half of the county is in this judicial district, and the other in the Sixth. Mr. Young, a resident of that county, will call upon you for the purpose of seeing about the matter, and will explain the situation to you. I feel like accommodating them if it can be done. Please let me know the situation. Yours, etc.,

C. J. DILWORTH.

Plum Creek, Neb., June 23, 1877.

Governor Garber, Lincoln, Neb.:

Sir—I am acquainted with a great many of the residents of Custer county and they all are very anxious to be in running order, and it would be a great

help in stopping the cattle and horse stealing. I am personally acquainted for a long time with F. H. Young, and can recommend him in every respect.

R. F. JAMES, Sheriff Dawson County, Nebraska.

We have read the statement of Mr. James and believe it true in every particular.

H. T. HEDGES, P. M.

E. S. STUCKEY, County Treasurer.

H. O. SMITH, Deputy Sheriff.

T. L. WARRINGTON, Attorney at Law.

W. H. LENGEL, County Clerk.

R. B. PIERCE, County Judge.

Plum Creek, Neb., June 23, 1877.

Hon. Silas Garber, Lincoln, Nebraska:

Dear Sir—Enclosed find letters from the county officers in regard to Custer county. Mr. MacColl is absent and will not be back for about two weeks; the other officers all signed the papers. I would like to get the commission by return mail, if possible, as I am in a hurry to get out to Custer county to look after my calves, as it is time to brand them. Hoping you will give this your early attention, I remain, yours respectfully,

FRANK H. YOUNG.

The governor, on the 27th day of June, issued the following proclamation, which launched Custer county on its glorious career:

#### PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, A large number of the citizens of the unorganized county of Custer have united in a petition asking that the said county be organized, and that James Gasmann, Anton Abel and H. C. Stuckey be appointed special county commissioners, and Frank H. Young be appointed special county clerk of said county, for the purpose of forming a permanent organization, and that the southeast quarter of section twenty-three, in township fifteen north, range twenty-two west, be designated as the temporary county seat of said county of Custer, and it appearing that the said county contains a population of not less than two hundred inhabitants, and ten or more of said petitioners are taxpayers and residents of said county:

Now, therefore, I, Silas Garber, governor of the state of Nebraska, in accordance with the memorial of said petitioners, and under and by the authority in me vested and in pursuance of the statute in such cases made and provided, do declare said county to be temporarily organized for the purpose of permanent organization, and do appoint and commission the persons above named as the special county commissioners, and the said person above





First Custer County Court House.

named as special county clerk of said county, and do declare the place above named and described as the temporary county seat of said county.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and caused to be affixed the great seal of the state of Nebraska.

Done at Lincoln, the capital, this twenty-seventh day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and first, and of this state the eleventh.

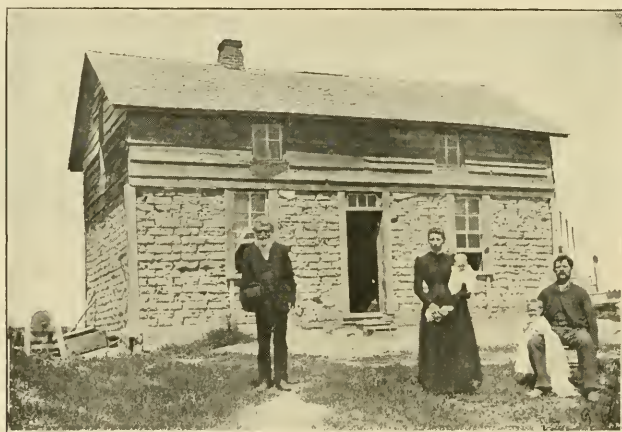
SILAS GARBER.

By the Governor: BRUNO TSCHUCK, Secretary of State.

During the summer various meetings were held on the South Loup, and in November the following first officers of Custer county were elected: County commissioners, James Gassman, Anton Abel, William Kilgore; county judge, Wilson Hewitt; county treasurer, S. C. Stuckey; county clerk, Reginald Tucker; sheriff, Joshua Woods; coroner, Al Wise; surveyor, J. M. Benedict; county superintendent, E. D. Eubank. Through some irregularity in the returns the election of the county clerk was not considered legal, and Frank H. Young, the temporary clerk, held over. At that time there were three voting places in the county, all of them being on the South Loup river. For

several years the cattlemen had everything their own way, but with the influx of homesteaders the cattlemen were soon outnumbered, and by 1880 were represented by a minority on the board of commissioners.

One of the interesting characters of this region at that time was Louis Wambsgan, one of the very earliest settlers, who located near where Oconto now stands. His house was the only stopping place for a number of years between Plum creek and the South Loup, and there was hardly a night the year around but that two or three cowboys could not be found at "Louie's," as he was familiarly called. He could always furnish sport for the boys in some way, and his annual turkey shoots during the holidays became famous throughout this region. I have heard many a good story told under Louie's hospitable roof.



Frederick Schreyer, first Homesteader in Triumph Tp. Settled 1875.

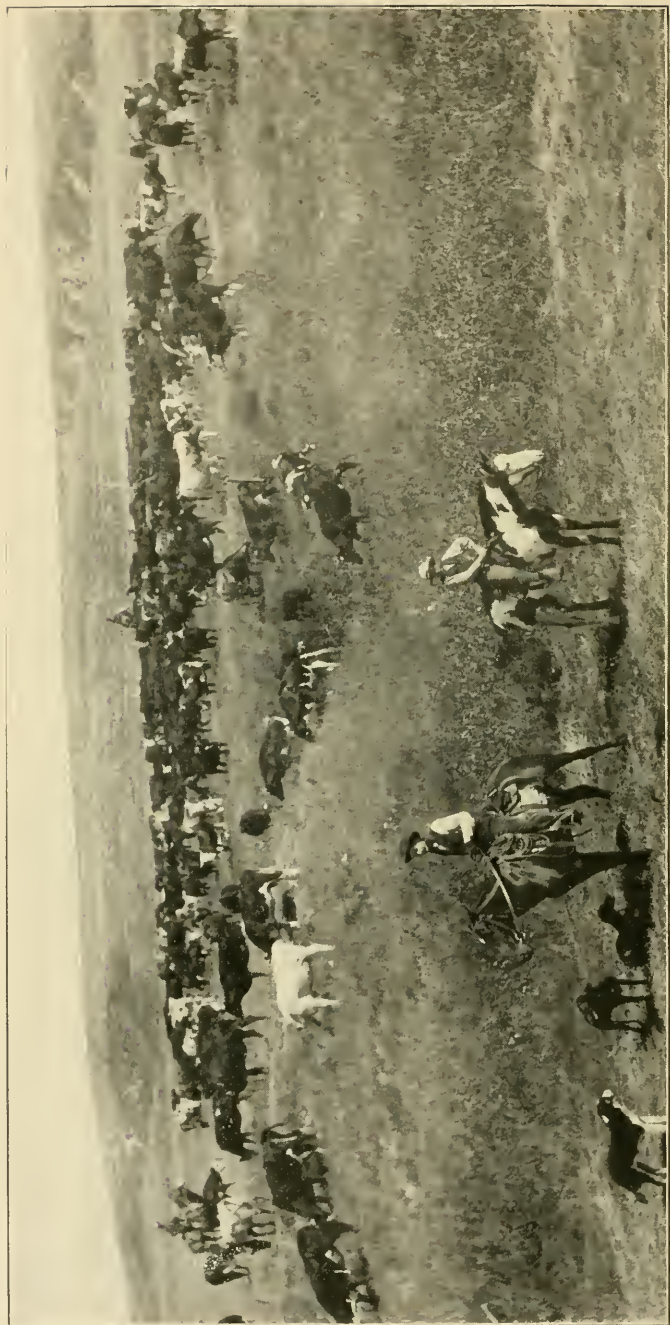
Frederick Schreyer was another interesting character. He was the first homesteader on the South Loup between Callaway and Arnold. He was a very resolute German, about fifty years of age, and as eccentric as he was resolute. He constructed a dugout in which he imagined he would be secure from the depredations of the festive cowboy. As we have said before, there was a natural antipathy between the cowboys and the settlers and the breach became wider and wider as time passed by and the settlers became more numerous. Armed encounters were frequent and bloodshed was often the result. Schreyer often had encounters with the cowboys and at one time was wounded in two places. He thought he was going to die, and had Charles Rockwood draw up his will. He had a ford near his house which he called

his ford, and nobody was allowed to cross the river at that place if he could prevent it, without his consent. He also surrounded his house with a high sod wall which he called his fortifications. On the morning of April 1, 1878, J. D. Haskell and the writer put some tools in a wagon and went up the river to repair a corral. In going we crossed the river at Schreyer's ford. We saw nothing of him at that time, but during the day he sent us word that if we attempted to cross there in coming back he would shoot us. When we arrived at the ford on the way back, and while watering our horses, we saw Schreyer and his son running toward the house with guns. As soon as we got within range they raised up from behind their fortifications and began firing at us. We were unarmed, and thinking discretion the better part of valor, put the whip to our team and got out of the way. In our flight we had to pass pretty close to the house, and one of the shots tore the step from the side of the wagon. From that time on there was trouble. Young Schreyer was arrested on the Platte, but escaped and went to Lincoln, where he remained a month. He came back to Kearney, was again arrested and brought up into Custer county. He and his father were taken, handcuffed, to Custer for preliminary examination, and were bound over to appear before the District Court. Not giving bonds, they were lodged in the Plumm Creek jail. In July they were tried and sentenced to serve a term in jail by Judge Gaslin. They served out their time and got home the next winter.

The war between the homesteaders and the cattlemen continued for some years, but at last the large herds were compelled to remove farther west where free range was more plentiful and homesteaders scarce. After being in possession of this country for twelve years, they, like the Indian, were compelled to give it up to more advanced civilization. Stockmen who had traveled over the plains between here and Texas said this was the best country for ranging stock to be found anywhere in the United States. No wonder, then, that they made such a hard struggle to retain it. Where once roamed thousands of buffalo and afterwards thousands of cattle we now see the locomotive steaming along the valleys. The country is now dotted over with beautiful farms and the ground that was once used for bedding down cattle in immense herds is now occupied by the village of Callaway.

Relics of unusual interest have at different times been found in this country. In the summer of 1880, while riding on the Middle Loup, with others, we came to a bed of charred wood near where the Milburn bridge now crosses that stream. A number of beads were scattered about, and upon closer examination we found among the coals the under jaw of a man, and also a silver medal two and a half inches in diameter with a hole in it. On one side was the bust of a man, with the name, "Pierre Choteau," under it.





Hon. H. M. Sullivan, who, besides being a Cattleman, is our present District Judge.  
Mr. Sullivan, with his Son and Dogs, can be seen in the foreground.

while on the other side were the words: "Upper Missouri Outfit." Our supposition was that some Indian trader had been in that country trading beads and other trinkets to the Indians for furs, and that they had gotten into a quarrel and that the savages had killed and burned the trader.

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## Cattle Industry in Ranch Days.

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H. M. SULLIVAN.

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In the early settlement of Custer county, there was but one occupation of sufficient importance to raise it to the dignity that would justify it being designated a business. This was the cattle industry. While the area of Custer county, then, as now, was 2,592 square miles, or larger than the state of Delaware, and more than twice the area of Rhode Island, still, this vast area was claimed by a few ranchmen who in a way occupied the greater part of it.

The great advantages of this county as a grazing country first began to attract attention in 1869.

Texas was then the greatest breeding ground for cattle and horses in the United States, and probably in the world, but it was without means of transportation and the stockman was compelled to trail his cattle many hundred miles from there to the railroad.

The principal shipping point in Nebraska for the Panhandle territory was Ogalalla. The cattle were brought to this point by the thousands. There were probably at times as many as 100,000 cattle held on the ranges in the country surrounding Ogalalla, awaiting shipment and sale. Many cattle brought to the railroad from Texas were wintered in the adjacent territory because they could not be shipped or disposed of to advantage.

While holding cattle for these purposes the great advantages of Custer county as a stock country were discovered and soon became generally known. Not all the ranchmen locating in Custer county, however, came from the South and West. Some came from Iowa and farther east. But shortly after the discovery of its advantages as a grazing ground, Custer county, with its numerous, constant streams of pure water, its valleys of hay land and its hills of splendid grazing land, became the mecca of the cattleman. Prior to 1872 it was practically unoccupied.

In the winter of 1869 and 1870 one Captain Streeter for the first time wintered cattle in the territory now comprising Custer county. He turned out in the fall on Ash creek, a short distance south of Broken Bow, 821 cattle, of which 385 were yearlings. They were all Texas cattle; the following spring he rounded up 819, a loss of only two head.

In 1872, what was known as the Tucker ranch, E. J. Boblitz, owner, where Tuckerville now is, Stuckey's ranch, Childs B. Herrington's and Anton Abel's ranches were located in the eastern half of the South Loup valley. Shortly after this, below them on the South Loup river, were located the ranches of Williams & Kilgore and John Myers.

In 1872 John Harrington, a cattleman from Texas, located a ranch eight miles northwest of the point where Callaway is now located, and he turned out 2,000 head of cattle.

In 1875 Finch Bros. located on the South Loup at the point where he now resides.

In 1876 Edward Holway and J. D. Haskell occupied the same ranch formerly located by Harrington, and this ranch was afterwards sold to the Parker Live Stock Company of Illinois. The range claimed by those owning this ranch was the South Loup valley from Triumph west to Cedar canon and the territory north adjoining.

The Parker Live Stock Company first came to the county in 1876 and located its headquarters at a point about two miles west of Callaway, and claimed as its range what is now known as Sand valley and the territory lying south and west thereof. This company began with 1,500 head of cattle. J. J. Douglas, afterwards clerk of the District Court of this county, was the manager.

In 1876 Durfee & Gasman located a ranch a short distance north of Callaway on the north side of the Loup at what is known as the Big Spring, on the farm now owned by N. M. Morgan, and they began business with 3,000 steers.

W. H. Paxton of Omaha, in 1876, located a ranch a short distance south-east of Callaway, on the Cottonwood, with 2,000 cattle.

In 1878 Durfee & Gasman bought out the Paxton ranch and consolidated it with their ranch on the opposite side of the river. The range they claimed after the consolidation was the large valley about Callaway, the Wood River valley and the valley of the Cottonwood.

In 1876 Arnold & Ritchie located a ranch on the Loup, a short distance east of Arnold, with 1,000 cattle.

In 1877 Henry Bros. located another ranch west of Arnold with 3,000

cattle. They claimed the west end of what is now known as the Big Table, Mills' valley, and to the head of the Loup, as their range.

In the fall of 1877 or 1878, the famous Olives located their ranch six miles east of Callaway and turned out thereon 5,000 head of cattle and claimed as their range the Loup valley east from their ranch, Spring creek and Turner valley. They also, about the same time, located another ranch near the mouth of the Dismal river, in Blaine county, and claimed to have in all something like 15,000 head of cattle. It is probable they did not own the number of cattle claimed.

In 1875 N. H. Dryden, now of Kearney, entered land on Victoria creek, settled there and brought with him about 100 head of cattle.

In 1876 Thomas Loughran and I. Childs each entered land on the river near the Dryden ranch, and also began raising cattle.

The same year Frank Ewing located a ranch on the Middle Loup valley near where Milburn now is, with 600 head of cattle.

In 1878 Smith & Tee located on the north side of the Middle Loup river not far from the ranch of Ewing. They turned out about 800 head of cattle.

In 1879 Finch-Hatten Bros. located a ranch on the Loup just below the mouth of the Dismal, with 700 head of cattle.

Shortly afterwards Miles & Gamlin followed with 1,600 head of cattle, locating not far from the ranch of Finch-Hatten Bros.

The cattlemen met with no reverses until the winter of 1880-81.

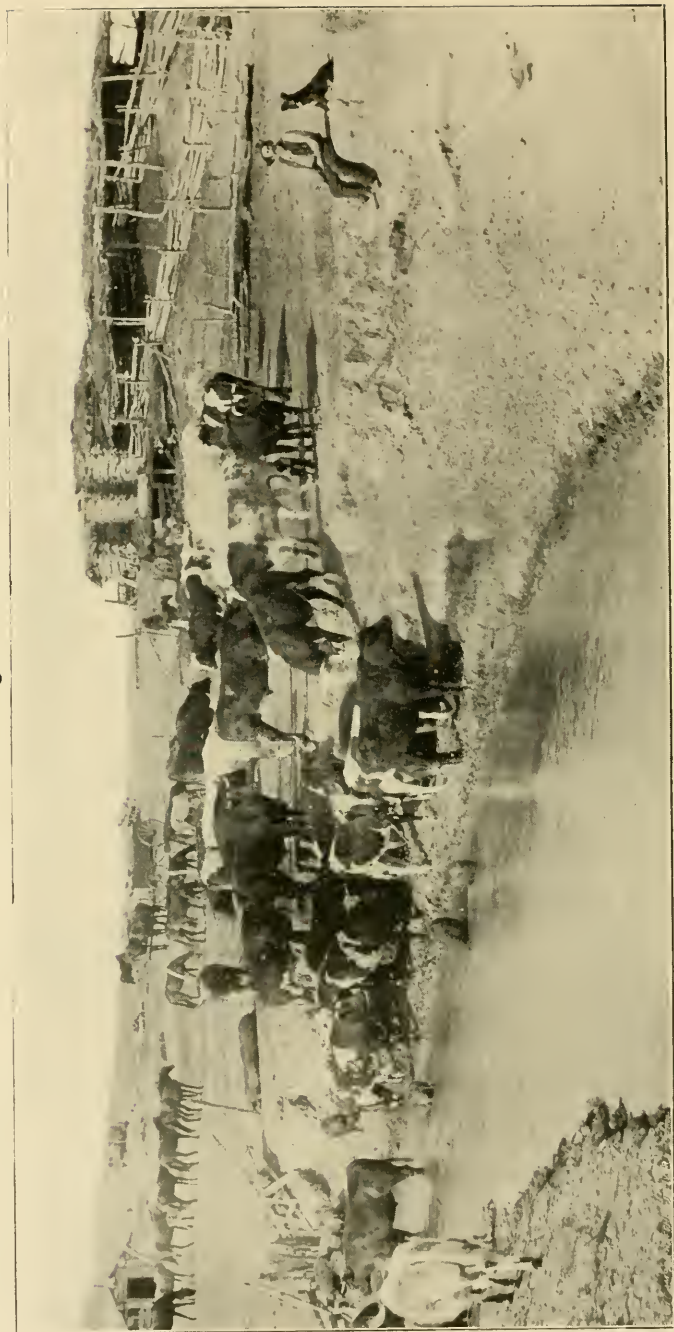
At this late date it is impossible to know, accurately, the number of cattle in Custer county in the summer of 1880, but there were probably very nearly 60,000 head of cattle, of the value of not less than \$1,500,000.

The greater part of these cattle had been reared or brought into the county after the year 1875.

Probably in the settlement of the United States no agricultural or grazing territory of a similar area witnessed such a rapid accumulation of wealth. Up to the winter of 1880-81 the profits from the business had exceeded the most sanguine expectation of the ranchman.

The winters were mild and pleasant, with plenty of moisture during the springs and summers. The buffalo grass upon the hills each year made a splendid growth. During the spring and summer the cattle did not graze upon this grass, for there was plenty of blue-stem, grama and rye grass in the valleys and lagoons. But with the advent of freezing weather the cattle at once went to the hills to feed upon the buffalo grass. No more valuable winter forage exists than buffalo grass properly cured. Cattle fed upon the best of wild hay will not be in better condition in the spring than those which





Thomas Loughran, one of the Oldest Settlers in Victoria Creek Valley, Custer County, Neb.



have wintered upon buffalo grass. In the economy of nature this grass seems to have been created and brought forth especially for winter feed.

The thousands of buffalo that originally roamed this country and made it their winter home lived upon this grass during the winter, hence the name.

In those days there was a greater profit in buying young Texas steers and holding them than in raising calves. Yearling steers brought here from Texas could be bought at from \$5 to \$6 per head; two-year-old for \$9; three-year-old for \$12 to \$14; cows from \$10 to \$12.

These same steers kept on Custer county range for from eighteen months to two years would sell from \$25 to \$40 and \$45 per head.

For a number of years no taxes were levied against the cattle.

No investment in real estate was necessary. The cedar canons furnished material for houses, corrals and fuel. There was no expense for fencing, nor wells. The increase in value was nearly all profit. The only important items of expense in the business were supplies for, and wages to, the cowboys. They received \$35 to \$40 per month.

Prior to the winter of 1880-81 very little hay was prepared for winter use. The cattle wintered on the range where they summered. During the winter the cattle were permitted to roam wherever they felt inclined, and no attention was paid to them.

The work of handling the cattle began with the spring round-up about the first of May, and closed with the last shipment of cattle to market in the fall, which was about the first of November.

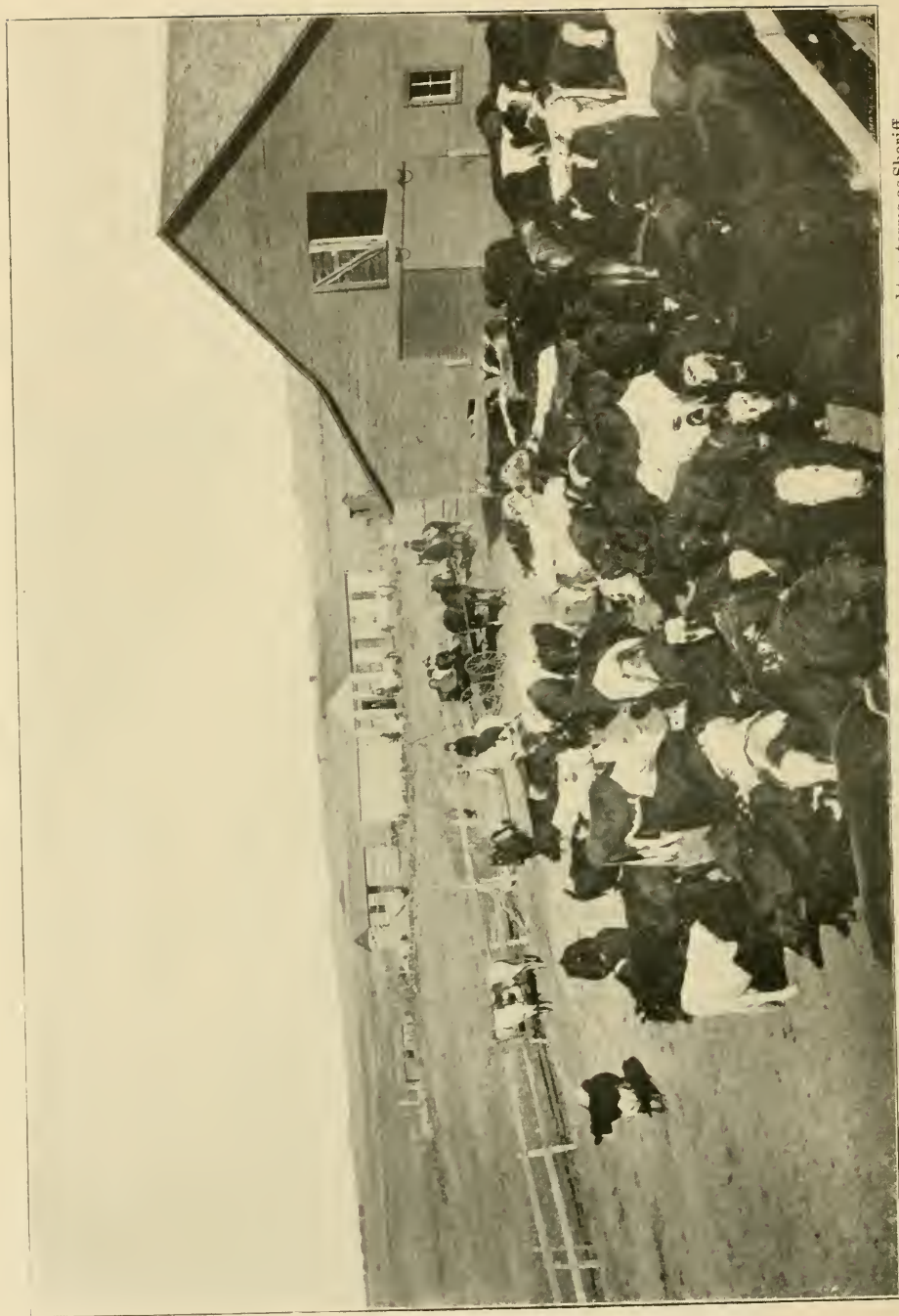
The cowboys, after the long, idle winter, looked forward to the spring round-up with the same desire that the soldier, after months in the barracks, longs for active duty in the field and for battle.

As the time for beginning of the round-up drew near the cowboy would be found busily engaged in washing his clothing and blankets, his saddle and bridle were cleaned and oiled, bits, spurs and six-shooters were polished, and saddle ponies curried and given extra feed and attention.

Among these men were found that same diversity of character, temperament, energy and intelligence common to mankind everywhere.

A reputation for courage was a necessary requisite to good standing in cowboy society. He who could display the greatest recklessness, or assume the role of the greatest dare-devil, stood foremost and was the leader of that society.

This desire for notoriety among his fellows led the cowboy into many serious difficulties and gave rise to the general opinion that he was without feeling or regard for the rights of others and naturally cruel. This opinion was erroneous. His recklessness and occasional cruelty were not the natural



Cattle Rauch of C. T. Holliday, near Arnold. Mr. Holliday is an old timer in Custer County, and served two terms as Sheriff.

products of his nature, but were rather, in most instances, assumed in a spirit of bravado.

As a rule, the cowboy was true to his friends, and with him it was a religious principle to stand by and never desert a friend in a "tight place."

In the general round-up in the spring, all cattlemen having cattle upon the territory to be covered took part. Sometimes as many as 100 men worked together. A captain was selected and he directed the men. Cook wagons were provided and these were kept convenient to the men at work on the range.



Brighton Ranch.

Each day cattle found were driven to a point selected by the captain, where the calves were branded and the cattle of the different owners were "cut out" from the others and driven back to the range of the owner, and so work went on from week to week until all the territory where it was probable cattle of those engaged in the round-up could be found was covered.

After this round-up was completed each ranchman again covered his own range, branded the calves found there, and again later in the summer when the steers had become fat, the range was again gone over and those in condition for the market cut out and driven to the railroad and shipped.

Probably no better idea of the dangers and hardships upon the range can be conveyed than by the reproduction here of a letter recently received by the writer from J. D. Haskell of Arnold, who, while now owning valuable ranches in Custer and adjoining counties, well stocked with cattle, in the early days





J. D. Haskell's Ranch, near Arnold, Neb.

began business for himself as a cowboy working by the month.

Modesty has evidently deterred Mr. Haskell from disclosing what part he took in the incidents related in this letter. It is clearly inferable, however, from the letter, that the "lone cowboy riding beside the stampeding herd," was he.

He says: "In those days the big cattle owners thought that if they furnished a tent for their men to sleep in they would be slow to leave it on stormy nights and get out and help hold the cattle. On the round-up and on the trail the cattle had to be night-herded every night.

The cattle that had been gathered were never left for a moment until they were back on the range of the owner. Night shifts were necessary. The first shift rode around the cattle until 11 o'clock, the second from 11 until 2 o'clock, and the third from 2 o'clock until after breakfast. These reliefs would have from one to four men, according to the size of the herd.

"In the spring, through the month of May, a great deal of rain fell.

"Frequently it was cloudy and drizzly for three or four days at a time. The cowboys were compelled to make their beds on the wet ground, and very often a heavy rain would come on in the night and they would find themselves lying in a sheet of water. In such cases there was nothing to do but get up and lean against the wagon or saddle horse until morning.

"With daylight work would begin and no opportunity offered through the day to dry clothing and bedding. When night came on again there was nothing to do but turn into wet blankets.

"No stove was furnished with the cook wagon. Bread was baked in a "dutch oven" and other food in skillets.

"Frequently there was no time to eat breakfast. It always seemed strange to me that the men, compelled as they were to constantly endure this exposure, escaped contracting fatal diseases.

"In 1877 three men and a cook were holding a band of 1,000 Texas steers on the Muddy where Broken Bow now stands. They had to night-herd the cattle every night. They saw only one man pass during the three months they were there. They received no mail and had nothing to read. As they were all young men who had been reared in the far east, they experienced a lonely time shut in from the outside world.

"The last of September the owner sent a man to direct them to move the cattle to the ranch near where Callaway now is, that they might be taken from there to Plum Creek and shipped to Chicago.

"The first night after the start for the ranch they camped about seven miles west of where they had held the cattle. The early part of the night was beautiful. All the boys but the night herder had turned in and for the first time in three months were enjoying sleep under a roof.

"About 10 o'clock the man out with the cattle observed a black, angry cloud moving up from the north. He rode to the tent, called to the other men to hurry up and help hold the cattle.

"They got up slowly, grumbling. However, as soon as they looked out and saw what a terrible storm was coming they rushed for their horses, but before they could saddle and mount the storm had struck them.

"In the meantime the watcher had hurried back to the cattle. He had almost reached the head of the herd when the storm broke. The darkness was intense. A terrible wind drove the rain in sheets. The entire herd jumped to their feet as one steer and started on a wild stampede before the storm. And oh, such a night!

"The instant the cattle started the boy was also gone like a shot along the side of the herd. For more than a mile he ran beside the herd, over chop hills, across canons, trying to get in the lead of the steers.

"The roar of 4,000 hoof beats, mingled with the constant crash of thunder, made it a race never to be forgotten. The cattle could only be seen by the rider at the flash of the lightning, which was so dazzling as to almost blind his eyes.



The Old Black Ranch on Deer Creek, Owned and Refitted by Geo. Adams, Union Stock Yards, Chicago. Wm. Montgomery, Foreman. This is the Finest Equipped Ranch in the Northwest.

"Time and again the wiry pony was on his knees, but almost instantly up and again going.

"Gradually the pony gained upon the leaders and the rider held him in against them. They began to swerve from their straight course before the storm. Gradually he brought them to running in a circle, then as he closed in nearer the outside cattle the circle became smaller and smaller until they were at a standstill.

"The storm ended as suddenly as it began. Shortly his companions were there and the cattle were driven back to the tent and held until morning, when, on a count of the herd, it was found twenty-five were missing. These



were found later not far from where the cattle were stopped the night before, lying upon the hillside resting from their terrible run.

"The point where that stampede was stopped was at what is now the Charles Jeffords farm at the foot of the Big Table."

The winter of 1880-81 will never be forgotten by those engaged in the cattle business in Custer county. Men who in the beginning of that winter were wealthy, found themselves bankrupt in the spring.

Early in the winter a rain began falling. The grass became thoroughly saturated; then it suddenly turned cold and every stalk, spear and blade of grass at once became an icicle—all matted together in one sheet of solid ice. Immediately following this came a heavy snow, from ten to twelve inches deep, which was again followed by another rain, and this in turn by another sudden cold wave, the result of which was to cover the surface of the snow with a thick, strong crust.

The country was covered with this ice and snow until spring. The winter was very severe, the temperature ranging for days and weeks at from ten to twenty below zero. The conditions were such that it was almost impossible for the cattle to get to the grass. The winds which ordinarily blew the snow off the hills and left the grass thereon free to the cattle could not affect this solid body of ice and snow.

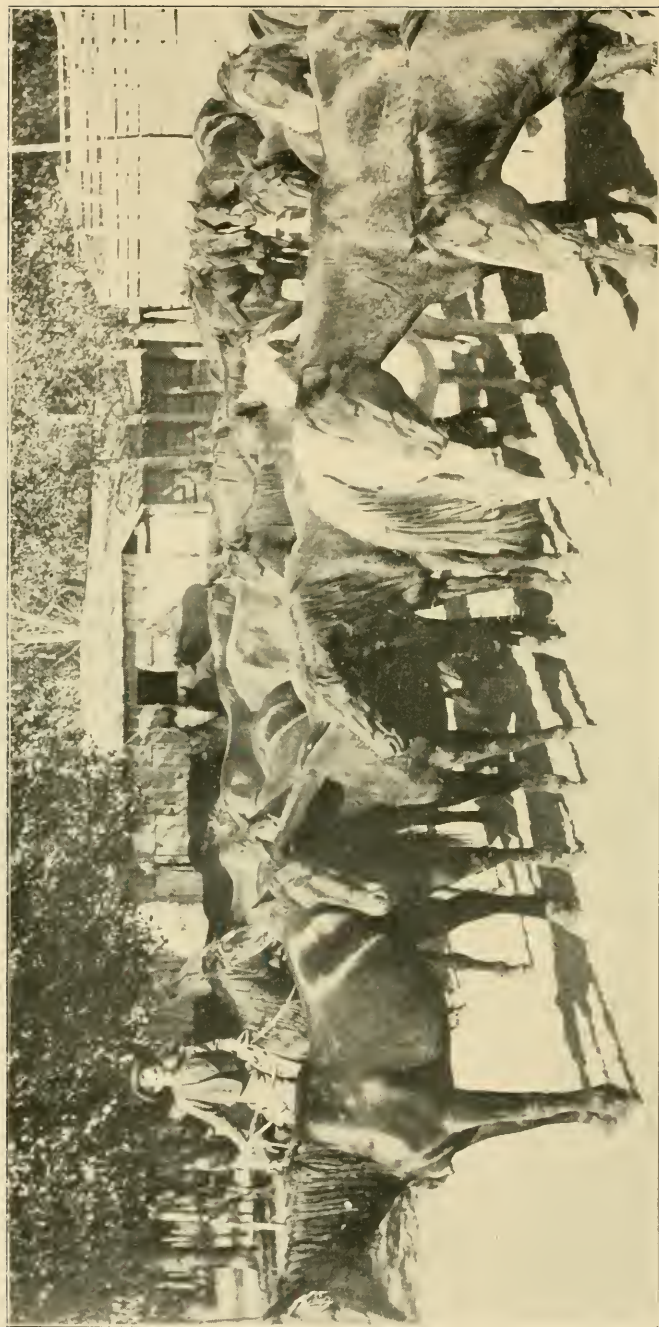
The legs of the cattle traveling about in a famished condition seeking food soon became bruised and bleeding from contact with the sharp crust on the snow.

There was plenty of feed on the ground, but the cattle could not get at it. They died by the hundreds and thousands. It was estimated that from seventy-five to ninety per cent. of the cows and calves on the range perished that winter and sixty per cent. of the steers also perished. They lay in piles behind the hills where they had sought shelter.

The following spring many who had engaged in the business in Custer county, and who until this winter had believed there was no grazing country equal to it, quit the business in disgust and left the county.

Nothing like this winter had preceded it in the history of the country, and nothing like it has been experienced since.

The winter of 1880-81 marked the termination of extraordinary profits in the cattle industry of Custer county. Already farmers had begun to immigrate to the county and select for their homes the level and more fertile portions. This immigration soon became a great stream and by 1882 all those parts of the county most suitable for agriculture had been taken. Free range was at an end. The few ranchmen remaining after the winter of 1880-81 were in a constant struggle with the homesteader. The latter's crops were



Prof. Barnes (better known as Rattle-nake Alph among the Cowboys) Breaking Horses on the Finch Bros. Ranch, at Milldale, Neb.



destroyed by the former's cattle, and in turn the cattle were destroyed by the indignant homesteader.

A very bitter feeling existed between those engaged in the two occupations; neither was fair nor just with the other. The weaker was compelled to give way to the stronger. There were a hundred homesteaders to every ranchman. A few of the more courageous cattlemen made a struggle to hold their ranges. They fenced in large tracts of territory, constructed wells in these pastures and the cowboys in their employ made homestead, pre-emption and timber-culture entries therein under the government land laws.

Frame shacks or shanties were constructed, called by the cowboys in their applications and final proof, houses. These were in many instances upon runners or wheels and were moved from claim to claim. The same shanty oftentimes answered the purpose of a house in making final proof for three or four cowboys upon as many different claims.

But all this was of no avail to the ranchman. The homesteader made entries within his pasture. He contested and had cancelled the entries of the cowboys. He cut and destroyed the fences.

Bloodshed and murder were in many instances the result. In the courts the ranchman had but little hope of success. In his controversy with the homesteader he must try his case to a jury of homesteaders.

By the close of 1884 there were fully 18,000 people in Custer county, and probably not to exceed 4,000 cattle.

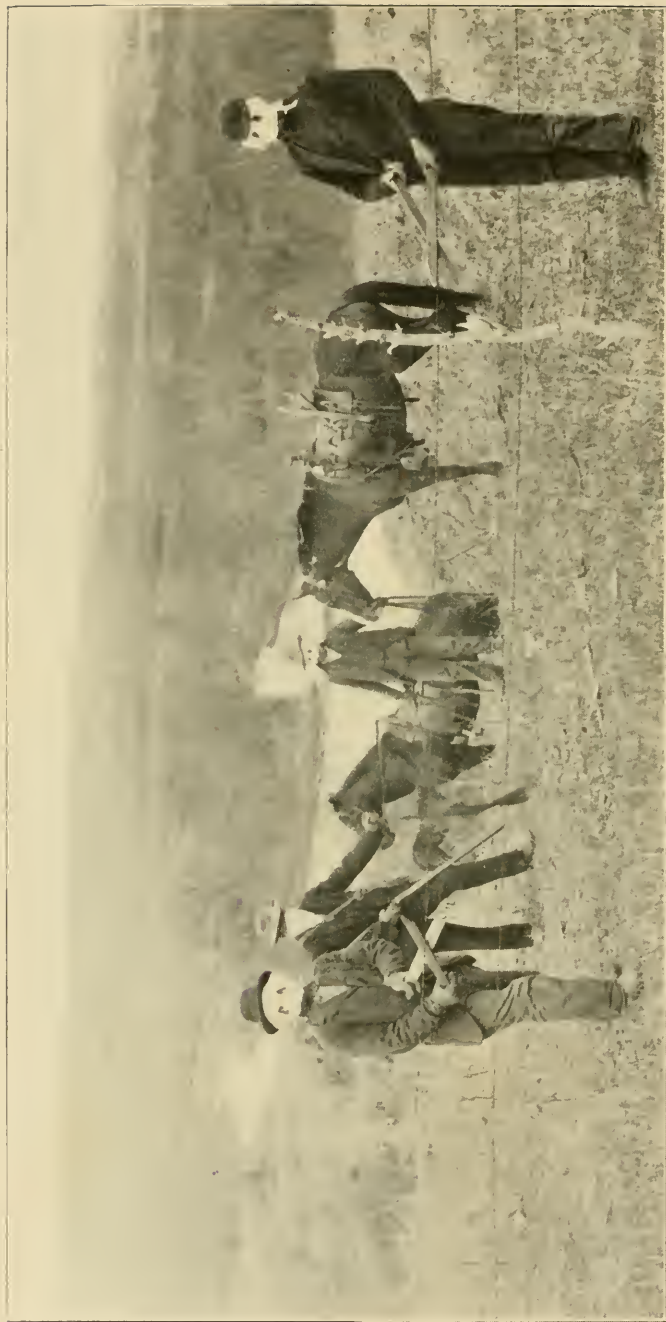
As the ranchman and the Texas steer in the '60's and early '70's had driven out the Indian and the buffalo, so now in the '80's the ranchman and the steer were compelled to give way to the farmer and the horse.

It is not infrequent, even at this time, to hear expressions of regret that the free range has been converted into farms. Those who express these regrets do so without reflection.

At this time over 20,000 prosperous people make their home in Custer county. The very great majority of these own the land whereon they live. They are fairly prosperous, and the whole population, in comparison with that of the East, where half the farmers, or more, are renters, may be said to be very prosperous.

Trains of cars upon the different railroads into or through the county have taken the place of the freight wagons of the original homesteader. Churches and school houses now occupy the sites where formerly were pitched the wigwam of the Indian and the tent of the cow-puncher.

The cattle industry in Custer county is again becoming important, though conducted upon a different plan from the original one. The farmer to-day produces grain in the valley and more fertile portions of the county and



While some of the party led the Horses and carried the Winchesters, others, with sharp pinchers, cut fifteen miles of the Brighton Ranch Co.'s fences between every post in a single night.

ranges, through the summer and fall, his cattle upon the hills adjoining him which he owns. There are no great herds, but probably as many cattle in the county now as there were immediately prior to the winter of 1880-81, and of a very much superior quality.

The cattle industry to-day is not so profitable as then, because more expensive, but carried on in connection with farming, it is still a profitable business.

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## Old Settler's Story.

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Let the reader turn back to September, 1837, to a farm house in Richland county, Ohio, and he will find everything in confusion and bustle. A covered wagon is standing at the door, and the process of packing up household goods and storing them in the wagon tells the whole story. These people are preparing to leave the old home to push westward towards the setting sun, to secure a home across the big river in the Black Hawk territory, now the state of Iowa. It is a touching scene to behold, as the children pack away in the wagon such little keepsakes as they can carry with them, and shedding childish tears over those that are too bulky for the limited room they have and which must be left behind. The older members of the family are visiting familiar spots where many hours of childish pleasure have been spent, and bidding good-bye to companions whom, in all probability, they will never meet again, while little Swain, a chubby fellow of eighteen months, laughs—yes, laughs, at this early age the hero of our story laughs and crows, and sticks his fat little fists into his mouth, wondering what all this fuss is about anyway, except occasionally when he gets the colic (and he was subject to these spells when a little shaver.) Then the process of packing had to be discontinued and every member of the family was called upon to do something to relieve the little fellow's suffering and to direct his attention from himself. Jacob, David and Thomas would beat on the bottom of the dish pan or boiler, with sticks, in an attempt to make more noise than the baby, and little Ruth and Elizabeth would clap their hands and dance, while father carried him, singing: "Bye, Oh Baby Bunting," and mother administered catnip tea and watched father to see that he carried the baby right side up until he became quiet once more. And the mild-eyed oxen stand patiently waiting for the last piece of furniture to be packed preparatory to starting upon their long journey of several hundred miles. This man's name is John

Finch and his wife's name is Comfort. And she has indeed proven to be a comfort to John, and is destined to still further prove her title to the name in the years of toil and hardship that are before them in their pioneer home.

We pass over a period of several weeks and ask our reader to go with us to that then far off and almost unknown land, "beyond the Mississippi," to a point about thirty miles west of the present city of Davenport, in Cedar county, Iowa, on Sugar creek, in the heart of a howling wilderness. We here find our pioneer and his family. They have gone into camp and the male portion are busily engaged in cutting down trees and hewing the logs for a cabin. The country is very sparsely settled, and for weeks the Finchs do not see the face of a human being outside of the family, except occasionally that of some roving red man who drops in on them to beg whatever he can, and steal what he cannot procure by begging, if opportunity offers. Everything goes on merrily and while this is a great change from the eastern home, yet the mother bravely bears her share of the burden of building the new home in the wilderness. She may sigh in secret when she thinks of the many little conveniences left behind with civilization, but she is always ready with a quiet smile of welcome when the husband comes in from a hard day's work, and attends to the many little wants of her children with a cheerful earnestness that leaves her little time for repining. The cabin is soon finished and John has secured a job of carpenter work a few miles away from a man who has a big scheme for building a county seat and is having a store put up. As John hammers away he is thinking of the home comforts that the money for his work will bring, and that soon they can have some meat and potatoes to store away for the winter, which is fast approaching, and to renew the supply of cornmeal which he knows is almost exhausted. He will have \$90 earned to-night, and to-morrow he must ask his employer for some money and let one of the boys take the oxen and go to Neighbor Flint's, buy their winter supply of corn and take some of it to mill, as he has heard that Mr. Flint had quite a lot of corn to sell, being the only man in that part of the country who had raised a surplus, and who was making a fortune by selling it for \$1.25 a bushel. The following morning when John Finch appeared ready for the day's work he found the building closed and a notice that work would be suspended for the present. He learned from parties on the premises that the proprietor had "gone broke" and left for parts unknown the night before, leaving the workmen without a nickel for their wages. Here was a "go" sure enough. John had spent his last cent a week before and was depending upon this money. He turned towards his home with a heavy heart, not knowing what was to be done. He well knew that Flint had the reputation of being a very close man, and had some misgivings about



getting any corn unless he had the money to pay for it. His wife had informed him that very morning that there was hardly a pound of meal left in the house, and he had cheered her up by telling her what he intended to do. But now he must return home with starvation staring them in the face, and to make matters worse a storm which for several days had been threatening, set in, and promised to be a severe one.

In the little log cabin of John Finch that day and the following night there was gloom and disappointment, as the little remaining food was portioned out so that it would last as long as possible, while the wind howled and whistled without, piling the light snow in huge drifts, making it a task to be out long enough to feed and water the oxen and procure fuel to keep the old-fashioned fireplace filled with blazing logs, which snapped and crackled merrily and afforded the family the only comfort they had that long, dreary day. As John sat gazing into the glowing coals he had time to look into the future, where he saw a coming generation enjoying the results that were to follow the trials and hardships of himself and other pioneers. The next morning they sat down to the last morsel of food in the house. It was still storming, but not nearly so hard as yesterday. After some minutes of silence the mother, who had been making a pretense of eating, but was in reality dividing the food on her plate among the younger children, says in a low, sad tone: "John, what are you going to do if this storm continues?" John sits for a long time without speaking, his manly frame seems convulsed with emotion and big tears force themselves from his eyes. He finally recovers his voice and says: "Mother, I am not going to see you and the children starve. Old Flint has got to let me have some corn, money or no money."

He pushed back from the table, having barely tasted the morsel of food before him, as he, too, had been making but a pretense of eating. He arose, put on his overcoat and muffler and was soon on his way to Flint's. His wife watched him out of the window as he disappeared through the trees, and then with a sigh returned to the work of setting things to rights in the little home, and cooing and chirping to little Swain, who is inclined to be colicky and needs extra care.

John floundered along as best he could through the deep snow drifts, over fallen timber and around dense patches of undergrowth which it was impossible to penetrate. After about an hour of this kind of walking he came to quite a clearing and saw a commodious log house, with stables and outbuildings, indicating that the owner, although on the frontier, was a man of some means. John approached the door and knocked rather timidly, and the misgivings he had entertained all along did not abate in the least as he stood there waiting for some one to answer. A sharp, rasping voice, pitched

in a high key, bade him enter. He stamped the snow from his feet as best he could and opened the door. "Mercy me! Come in quickly," spoke the rasping voice, "and shut the door, or the room will be full of snow." John got inside as quickly as possible and apologized for causing so much trouble.

Let us take a look at the owner of the premises as he sits in an easy chair before a large fireplace full of blazing logs. He is past middle age; iron gray hair and blue eyes; angular features, with the lips drawn tightly over the teeth, and a self-satisfied smirk playing around his mouth. Politely inviting John to a seat, he inquires:

"What may I call your name, sir?"

"My name is John Finch."

"Ah, yes! Mr. Finch, I have heard of you, I believe. You moved in on Sugar creek and took a claim this fall."

"Yes, sir," replied John, "and I understand, Mr. Flint, that you have corn to sell at \$1.25 a bushel, and I have come to buy a bushel of you to take to mill, as we haven't a mouthful of food in the house.

"Certainly, Mr. Finch. I shall be glad to sell you a bushel of corn and help a neighbor in a pinch, as I was very fortunate this year, and have plenty for my own use and to sell. You can have all you wish, Mr. Finch, if it's twenty bushels. My! but doesn't that storm rage fearfully? I wouldn't be surprised if we had the hardest winter we have had for years, Mr. Finch."

"Indeed it does look blue for a new beginner like me," remarked John, "and I thank you, sir, for your generous offer to let me have so much corn, but I have been unfortunate. I have been working all fall on the new county seat store since I got my house up, and I have used up every cent I brought with me. I had earned \$90 on the store, and had not drawn a cent of my wages, and yesterday found the work closed down and Jones gone without paying me. I only want to get a bushel of corn to keep my wife and children from starving, and as soon as this storm is over I will get work somewhere and pay you."

"Ah, Mr. Finch, that puts it in a very different light. You must know I—er—er, I—a—sympathize with you, but—er—a man has to look out for himself first and other folks afterwards. If you can bring me the money, Mr. Finch, I will be glad to let you have the corn, although I may be foolish to sell, as next year may be a drought."

John Finch sat in his chair for a few seconds, utterly dazed, hardly knowing whether he had heard the man aright. When he fully realized what it meant to the dear ones at home, and thought of the utter heartlessness and selfishness of this thing in the shape of a man, who for a few paltry cents would let them starve, his rage had no bounds, and he sprang to his feet. With



flashing eyes he towered above old Skin-Flint like an avenging angel, with clenched teeth and the veins standing out on his temples like whip cords, as he said: "Mr. Flint, I have one more expedient to try to save my family from starvation. If that fails, I am coming back and, by the eternal, I am going to have a bushel of corn, money or no money."

He flung open the door and again rushed out into the storm, in which he soon disappeared, while old Flint cowered down in his chair, whining and saying that if it became known that he was letting his corn go without the money he would soon not have a bushel left in his crib.

John walked rapidly for some time, then suddenly stopped, and, looking cautiously around, took his knife and cut a hickory stick about three feet long and two and a half inches in diameter at the butt. He muttered again: "By the eternal, if I fail, I will have a bushel of corn, money or no money." Carefully leaning the club against a stump, he hurried onward. He soon came to a small clearing in which stood a little rough log cabin. He rapped smartly at the door and was invited to enter by a cheery voice from within. He did so, and as soon as his eyes became accustomed to the light from the one small window, he discerned a pleasant-faced young fellow, with needle and thread, attempting to mend a rent in the sleeve of his blouse. The young man arose, gave him a hearty handshake and invited him to a seat, apologizing for the effeminate work in which he was engaged, adding:

"A fellow has to turn his hand to most any kind of work in this country, Mr. Finch."

"That's true, Mr. Bushnell, but you are lucky to have only yourself to provide for such weather as this."

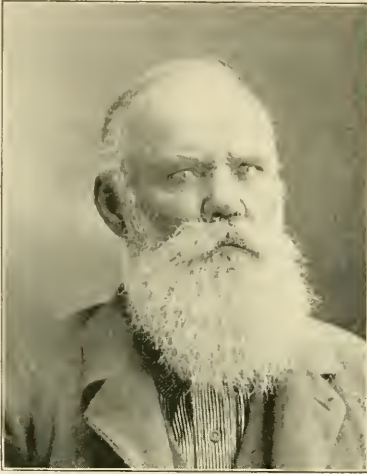
"I don't know but you are right, sir, but it gets awful monotonous sometimes, mending and cooking for one's self; I often think it would be nice to have some one depending on me for support."

John was too much concerned about his own troubles to dally long in suspense, and at once laid his case before the young man, who listened attentively. At the conclusion of the story of John's adventure with his rich neighbor Bushnell clenched his fist and muttered: "The old skinflint."

"Well, Mr. Finch, I have about a hundred bushels of potatoes, which is all the crop I raised this year, and if I can be assured of a living until spring, you shall have the potatoes."

A bargain was soon closed, whereby the potatoes were transferred to the Finch cabin, along with young Bushnell, who boarded with them all winter. Not being very well protected, the potatoes were soon frozen solid, but for six weeks the family had nothing else upon which to subsist. When the weather moderated John obtained some work, and as the years rolled on

he prospered and became independent. Young Swain, the hero of our story, grew apace and soon reached young manhood. He was a great admirer of the fair sex, and would often cast sheep's eyes at the girls when he thought they were not looking, but his extreme bashfulness came near consigning him to perpetual bachelorhood. He lived with his parents until 1863, when he was married to Sarah H. Moore, and in the spring of 1864, in company



E. S. FINCH.



MRS. E. S. FINCH.

with his brother, David, he made a trip to Montana in search of gold. Not being very successful, they started for home in a flatboat down the Yellowstone river. When they had floated down to within some ninety miles of the Missouri river winter overtook them and prevented further progress by that means. Having fallen in with three other men who had been in Montana on the same errand as themselves, they all joined in, built themselves a log cabin and hunted and trapped until the ice went out in the spring. They had to live for six months on bear, elk and deer meat, without either salt or bread of any kind. They had left their boat in the water and when the ice began to move in the spring it was torn to pieces, leaving the boys on foot in a wild, rough country, many miles from any settlement, with a large lot of furs and skins that must be transported by some means. They fortunately had an old whip-saw among their belongings, and with this they went to work and sawed lumber enough with which to construct a boat thirty-eight feet long and nine feet wide, into which they loaded their furs, which they took down to Yankton and Sioux City and disposed of for the snug sum of \$1,000.

They reached Omaha May 8, 1865, and the Finch boys proceeded home as fast as they could, where they were received with great rejoicing, the family not having heard a word from them since their departure almost a year before.

When and where E. S. Finch, the hero of this story, received the name of "Uncle Swain," and his good wife that of "Aunt Sarah," the writer does not know, but it was a long time ago, and hereafter in this sketch we shall use these names, as they are seldom referred to by any other in Custer county.

After the trip to the gold fields of Montana in 1864-5, Uncle Swain and Aunt Sarah moved to Hardin county, Iowa, where they lived until the spring of 1875. They had known what hard times meant in their childhood, and had determined at the outset of their married life to live economically. As a consequence they found themselves ten years later in fairly good circumstances and possessed of many of the good things of this life. As free range for stock had by this time become a thing of the past in Iowa, Uncle Swain and his brother, David, started to Nebraska in the latter part of May, 1875, with eighty head of cows, Aunt Sarah driving a horse team, while her husband navigated a prairie schooner drawn by two yoke of oxen. They landed at Kearney, Nebraska, on July 4th, having made the trip in about forty-eight days. They went into camp near Brady Island, cut and put up some hay for their cattle, and in October came over to the South Loup river and located a ranch on section 8, township 16, range 24. They arrived about dark and camped for the night. The next morning, while David and a younger brother who had come along with them were preparing breakfast, Uncle Swain saw something that looked like a post in the ground away off on the prairie. He picked up his gun and strolled leisurely over to investigate, and found the remnants of a camp, probably that of a beef outfit on their way to the Sioux reservation. The object that he had taken for a post proved to be a sugar barrel, and thinking it would be a good thing to pack meat in, stepped up to get it. He looked into it, then rubbed his eyes and looked again, and walked back to camp, procured a grain sack and returned to the barrel. These mysterious movements on the part of Uncle Swain excited the curiosity of his brothers, and when he came back to camp with the barrel under one arm and the sack half full of something on his back they shouted to him in chorus: "What have you got in the sack?"

"Coffee," puffs Uncle Swain, as he throws down the barrel and deposits the sack on the ground in front of him.

"Oh, you can't fool us; it's corn or oats."

For answer Uncle Swain gets an empty can, unties the sack and opens to view a good half bushel of fine looking coffee to the astonished gaze of





Uncle Swain followed down a corn row killing grasshoppers by the million. After going about 100 yards, stopped to rest and was disgusted to find the hoppers just as thick behind as in front of him.

his brothers. He takes out a large drawing and proceeds to make some for breakfast, and as the fragrant aroma arises from the boiling pot, David and his brother conclude that the coffee is poisoned, and try to dissuade Swain from drinking any of it. Not succeeding in this, they try to kick it over, but Swain stands out firmly and declares that the fellow who kicks his coffee into the fire will follow it. Seeing that he was in earnest, they permitted him to swallow two big tin cups full of it, after which, taking a long breath, he says: "Now, boys, if I ain't dead in fifteen minutes, you can have some of it." It is needless to say that soon after the two boys were enjoying as good a cup of coffee as they ever tasted, and as they had but a little tea with them the find proved a valuable one. They blessed the absent-mindedness of the cook who had gone away and forgotten his coffee barrel.

Upon investigation they found plenty of cedar in the canons near by, which they cut and used in the construction of a log cabin about twelve by fourteen feet in size. Then killing a wagon load of deer and elk, they returned to the camp at Brady's Island. In about two weeks thereafter they were settled on their ranch and put in the balance of the winter cutting and hauling cedar, building another log house sixteen by eighteen feet, making stables and corrals, and looking after their stock.

A funny incident which happened at one time while they were keeping batch for a short time at the new ranch is worth repeating. One morning the cook had an extra fine brewing of coffee and they all showed their appreciation of it by drinking more than usual. Uncle Swain had passed his cup the third or fourth time, when he observed something white in the coffee pot. He remarked:

"Say, Jim, where did you get the egg to clear yer coffee with this morning?"

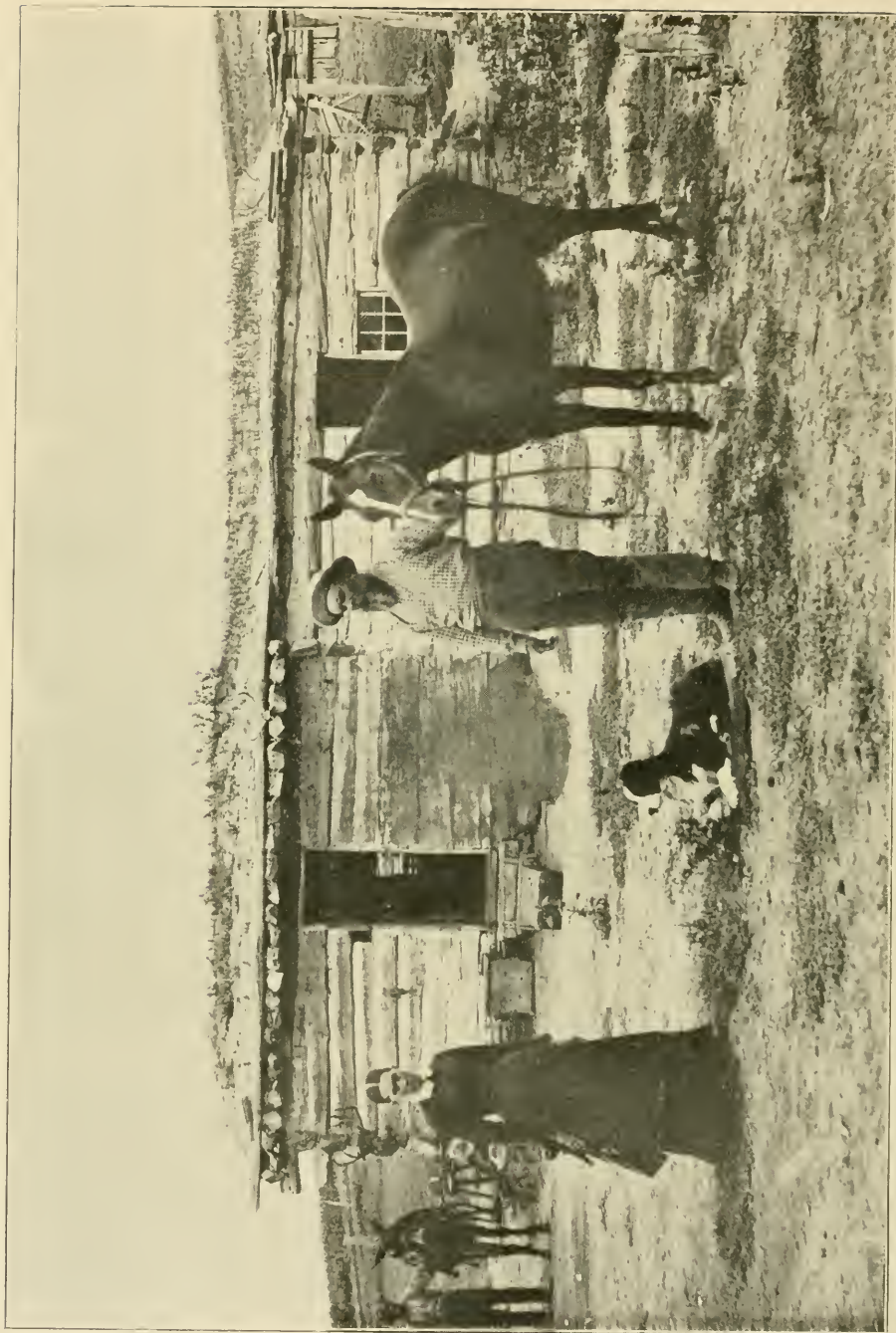
"Didn't have any egg," grumbled Jim, who appeared to be a little out of sorts and not in a talkative mood.

"What's the use of yer lyin' about it, Jim; I seed it when you was pourin' out that last cup of coffee."

"You didn't, nuther," snapped Jim.

The Finch boys had as a guest a stylish friend from Iowa, and he was called upon to examine the coffee pot to settle the dispute between Uncle Swain and the cook. The young man poured the grounds out in the **yard** and made a critical examination. He gave a sort of convulsive gasp, turned deathly pale, placed his hand near the region of his stomach and disappeared around the house. The antics of the young fellow caused the others to push their unfinished cups aside—Uncle Swain alone excepted—and to make an investigation of the contents of the coffee pot. Among the grounds they dis-





Log Cabin of E. S. Finch in early days. Built in 1875. Uncle Swain stands at right of picture, holding a favorite mare, while Aunt Sarah is on the left. The dog (Aunt Sarah's faithful companion) lies contentedly at Uncle Swain's feet.

covered a large, warty toad, swollen to three times his natural size. The old fellow had evidently climbed up between the logs of the cabin and fallen into the coffee pot, which sat close to the wall and had no lid.

In the spring of 1876 the boys planted about sixty acres of sod corn, which was just beginning to make fine roasting ears, when one afternoon they discerned what appeared to be a prairie fire, a dense cloud of smoke arising in the northwest. They wondered at a prairie fire at that time of the year, when the grass was green. They watched it intently as it came nearer and nearer, until it obscured the sun and darkened the air like an eclipse. When it had come within a hundred yards of them they heard a continuous cracking and snapping sound, which increased to a perfect roar as it approached them, when they discovered to their horror that a cloud of grasshoppers was upon them. They alighted and in a few seconds every green thing in sight was literally covered and hidden with a seething, crawling mass several inches in depth. The beautiful field of corn melted down as if each leaf was a spray of hoar frost in the rays of a noonday sun. Uncle Swain was dumfounded for a moment, but when he saw that corn fading he came to his senses, cut a large willow bush and went after those grasshoppers with a vengeance. He proceeded down a corn row, threshing to right and left, killing his thousands with every sweep, and mowing a swath of death in his track. When he had gone about a hundred yards he stopped to get his breath and discovered to his extreme disgust that there were as many grasshoppers behind him as there were ahead. This disheartened him and he gave it up as a hopeless task. The hoppers ate up everything in the shape of grain and garden stuff on the place, leaving it as brown and bare as if it had been swept by fire. They would settle on a post the thickness of a man's arm, and in a few seconds it would appear to be as big as a log. When the hoppers left it it would look as if it had been scraped with a knife, every vestige of bark and fiber being eaten off. Aunt Sarah and her sister-in-law had a fine patch of cabbages which they thought to save by covering the plants with hay; but the hay served only as a convenient shade for the hoppers, who crawled under it and dined off the juicy cabbage heads at their leisure. They then laid the hay around the patch and burned it, thinking to smoke the pests away, but to no avail. When they left that cabbage patch nothing remained but a few bare stalks eaten almost to the ground.

After the log house was finished Aunt Sarah was installed as cook, and many and varied were the experiences she passed through in that frontier home. The story of them alone would fill a large book. She had a dirt floor, covered with green cow hides which she stretched tightly, hair side up,

making the room look very neat and cozy indeed. She learned the art of tanning deer hides and the skins of other animals, and at this day has many beautiful rugs made from these which testify to her fine handiwork in that line. Aunt Sarah was the only woman within forty miles, and a braver one never trod the soil of Nebraska. While all the men folks were off on the round-up she was left alone for days at a time, and at one time a whole month, with only a dog and a cat to keep her company. She had to ride the range daily for several hours to prevent the cattle from straying away. Indian scares were frequent, and many a stout-hearted man would have been reluctant to remain in such a place in solitude as did this brave woman. But Aunt Sarah was always prepared for the worst, and Uncle Swain mixed a box of sugar and strychnine which she carried with her for three years. No doubt many of our readers will ask what use she expected to put this mixture to. She knew Indians were very fond of sugar, and whenever one of them obtained any of it, he would never take a taste until the whole band were present. Then, seated on the ground, he would pass the delicacy around, dropping a small portion in the palm of each outstretched hand. When all had been served they ate it at a given signal. Had a band of the savages robbed Aunt Sarah of her sugar, the result could be easily imagined. Aunt Sarah could throw the lariat with wonderful skill, and was always to be found where duty called her, no matter how disagreeable or how difficult the task she had to perform. To-day, after twenty-five years passed in Custer county, she sits in her elegant home by her cheerful fireside, and recounts the trials and tribulations of the past, many of them stranger than fiction. Uncle Swain is just as young to-day as he was twenty-five years ago. He has always been more or less a source of trouble to Aunt Sarah, although she now has him pretty well in hand. Some years ago whenever she gave him a "piece of her mind" and endeavored to show him the error of his ways, he would retaliate by threatening to commit suicide in some horrible manner. Upon one occasion Aunt Sarah was freeing her mind for Uncle Swain's benefit, when he shouted: "If you don't shut right up, I'll go out and freeze myself to death in that snow bank." Aunt Sarah was too much out of patience to remember former frights that she had received by similar threats, and kept right on laying down the law from her understanding of it. With eyes glaring into space, clenched teeth, and set features, like a man who contemplates some terrible deed, looking neither to the right nor to the left, he takes down his overcoat and puts it on, buttoning it up to his chin, walks deliberately out and lies down on the snow bank. These movements are followed by two pairs of curious black eyes belonging to his nephews, John and Bob, who look on with mouths wide open thinking the old man had gone



crazy. After a few minutes the freezing man raises himself up on one elbow, looks around and discovers these two pair of bright eyes watching him through a chink in the wood shed. He motions the boys to come to him and sends Johnny after the buffalo robe, which he carefully wraps around his body and again lies down to freeze in comfort. As he lies there he pictures Aunt Sarah inside taking on and weeping her eyes out over his sad fate. Catching another glimpse of the bright eyes he calls their owners to him and inquires, in a stage whisper:

"Say, boys, is the old gal a-cryin'?"

"Naw, she's laughin'."

Then, by George, that settles it; I won't freeze."

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## The Mitchell and Ketchum Tragedy.

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During the year 1877 a number of settlers located on Clear creek, near the east line of the county, among the number being Luther Mitchell and Ami Ketchum. Mitchell came from Merrick county, was a farmer about sixty-five years of age, and married. Ketchum was a blacksmith by trade, but had decided to become a farmer, although he still did some work at his trade for the neighbors. He was unmarried and was living with Mitchell at the time of which we are writing.

I. P. Olive was one of the wealthiest cattle men in Nebraska at that time, and owned many thousands of cattle that roamed over the valley of the South Loup river and adjoining country, and in common with other men in the same line of business, had suffered heavy losses from the depredations of cattle thieves. For this reason he became the prime mover in an attempt to drive the cattle thieves from the country. Olive resided in Plum Creek, Dawson county, but his ranch was on the South Loup river, about four miles east of the present town of Callaway. While in a general way he was a good sort of man, and very generous and courteous to those with whom he was on good terms, he was an implacable enemy and an adept in the use of firearms. His brother, Robert Olive, was a bad man when aroused. Bob Olive had previously killed several men in Texas, and to conceal his identity had assumed the name of Stevens and flown to Nebraska, where his brother I. P. had already established a ranch, and it was under the name of Stevens that he was known during his career in Custer county. A short time previous to the events which led up to the killing of Bob Olive, or Stevens, one Manley Capel



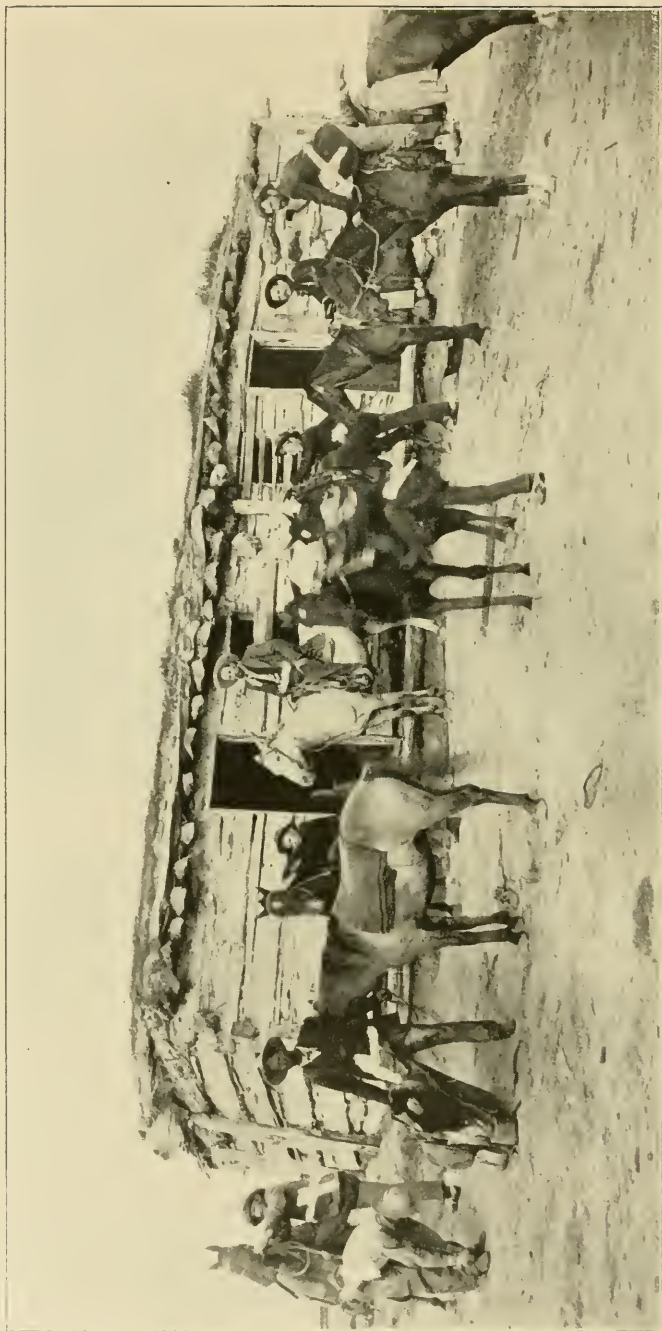
Old Mitchell Ranch on Clear Creek.

had been arrested on a charge of cattle stealing in Custer county, and in his confession he seemed to implicate Ami Ketchum in the nefarious business. This, with the information obtained from a man by the name of McIndeffer, who was acting as a sort of spy for the cattlemen (and who, by the way, was hanged as a cattle thief in No Man's Land, a few years ago, so it is said), so impressed the Olives that they determined to arrest Ketchum, and notwithstanding the enmity that was known to exist between Bob Olive and Ketchum, Sheriff David Anderson, of Buffalo county, made Olive a deputy to arrest Ketchum. In the company of two rough and reckless cowboys named Barney Armstrong and Pete Beaton, Bob Olive started for the home of Mitchell and Ketchum on the 27th day of November, 1878, with McIndeffer as a guide. When they arrived at the homestead of Mr. Mitchell, the latter and Ketchum were preparing to go to a neighbor's by the name of Dowse, to return a borrowed animal. Mrs. Mitchell was preparing to go with them. Before they started a stranger rode up and asked if he could have his horse



shod. Ketchum explained his plans for the day and asked the man to come the following day and he could shoe the horse. The stranger agreed to do so and rode away to rejoin Bob Olive and the other two men, who were hidden behind a small hill to the south of Mitchell's house. Having failed to get Mitchell and Ketchum separated by the ruse of getting the horse shod, the men now rode boldly up toward the settlers, who paid no particular attention to them, as men on horseback were the rule and not the exception in those days. Mrs. Mitchell had already taken her seat in the wagon, and the men were tying the animal to the hind axle of the vehicle. When within a short distance the cowboys made a dash on their horses, four abreast, and Bob Olive shouted to Ketchum to throw up his hands, as he was an officer of the law, at the same time presenting his revolver. Ketchum threw up his right hand with a forty-four Colt's revolver in it, and both men fired at the same instant. Several shots were exchanged, resulting in the breaking of Ketchum's left arm. As soon as the shooting commenced the old man, Mitchell, grabbed his Winchester and took deadly aim at Olive, who discovered him and shouted: "My God, old man, don't shoot," but it was too late. Mitchell's finger had already pressed the trigger and the bullet sped forward to do its fatal work. Olive reeled in his saddle and the cowboys prevented him from falling. He gasped: "Boys, I am done for." Supporting him on his horse, they turned and rode rapidly away, followed by bullets from Ketchum's Winchester, which was loaded by a girl named Tamar Snow, a step-daughter of Mitchell, Ketchum being unable to load the gun himself on account of his broken arm. He fired the last shot at a range of 200 yards, just as the cowboys dropped out of sight behind the rise of ground previously referred to. One of Ketchum's bullets cut a scarf around Beaton's neck in two, drawing blood, and another shaved off one side of the rim of his hat close to the head. Another went through Armstrong's foot. McIndeffer, who afterwards described the encounter, declared that Ketchum came as near being the devil as any man he ever saw, and that he believed he would have killed every one of them, even with one broken arm, if they had not gotten out of the way. As soon as the cowboys got out of reach of the flying bullets, Olive was laid on the ground and a consultation held. The wounded man was then taken to the dugout of one Harrington, who lived about a quarter of a mile further down the creek, where Olive made his will and sent for his wife. He died in three days afterwards.

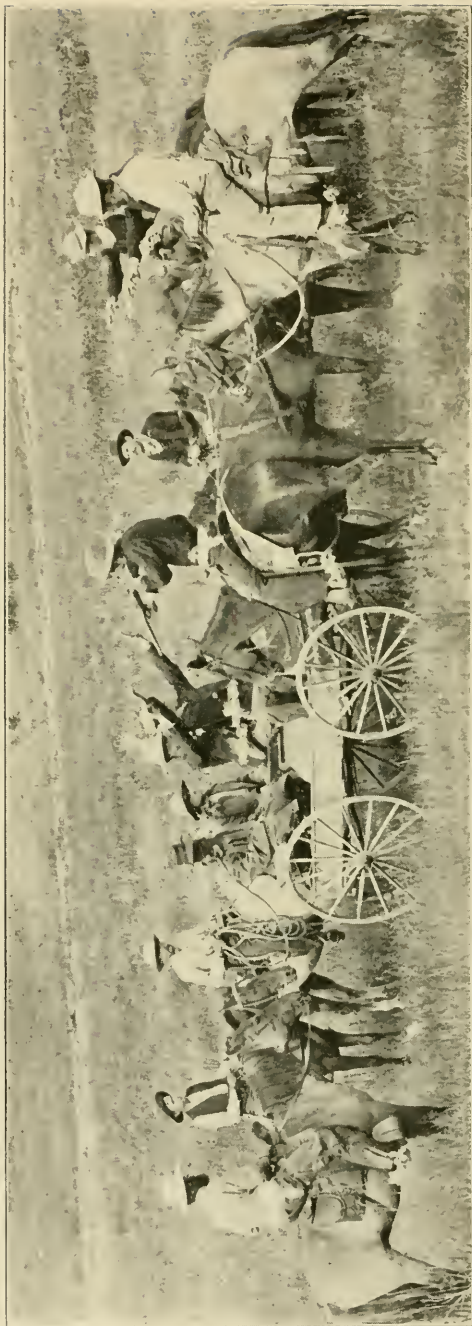
As soon as the cowboys disappeared from sight Mitchell and Ketchum packed up their few movable belongings and started for their former home in Merrick county. As soon as the news of the shooting spread over the country there was great excitement among the cattlemen and cowboys, and



The Old Olive Ranch. Cowboys preparing to intercept the Officers who are bringing Mitchell and Ketchum into Custer County for trial.

the same night a large force returned to the Mitchell house, undoubtedly to wreak vengeance on the two men, but finding them gone they set fire to the house and burned up the roof, that being the only part of it that was combustible.

When they arrived in Merrick county Mitchell and Ketchum went to the house of George Gagle, and a Dr. Barnes was sent for to attend to Ketchum's broken arm. The next morning, acting upon the advice of friends, and having found a place of safety for Mitchell's family, the two men started back to Custer county to give themselves up to the authorities for the killing of Stevens. On their way they passed through Loup City and consulted with Attorney Aaron Wall, who advised them to proceed no farther, as the cowboys would certainly lynch them. They remained several days in Loup City and then went to the house of J. R. Baker, on Oak creek, in Howard county, where they were arrested by William Letcher, sheriff of Merrick county, and E. W. Crew, sheriff of Howard county, giving themselves willingly into the custody of the officers. I. P. Olive had offered a reward of \$700 for their arrest and several officers, among whom were Crew of Howard county, Anderson of Buffalo county, Gillan of Keith county and Letcher of Merrick county were anxious to capture them in order to secure the reward. But after the capture Crew and Letcher were unwilling to assume the responsibility of taking the prisoners to Custer county and of turning them over to the cowboys. They were finally taken to Buffalo county and lodged in the jail at Kearney, in charge of Sheriff Anderson, for safe keeping. The prisoners were at first held without legal authority, as Olive had given the warrant for their arrest, issued in Custer county, into the hands of Barney Gillan, sheriff of Keith county, to serve. The prisoners had engaged Thomas Darnall of St. Paul and E. C. Calkins of Kearney as counsel. Their attorneys endeavored to have the prisoners retained in the jail at Kearney, having reasons for believing they would be lynched if taken to Custer county. The feeling at Kearney was against Mitchell and Ketchum, as the people had been led to believe that Olive had been shot while fulfilling his duty as an officer of the law. A dispute arose among the sheriffs as to a division of the reward offered by I. P. Olive for the arrest, but Olive declined to pay the money until the prisoners were delivered in Custer county. A proposition was finally made to Sheriff Anderson to take the men to Custer county, for which service the others agreed to pay him \$50. This proposition was declined by Anderson, unless he were paid enough to enable him to employ a sufficient number of men to guard the prisoners. It was at last arranged that Gillan should take the prisoners to Custer county, as he held the warrant for their arrest, and he promised to notify their attorneys, Darnell and Calkins, so



Holdup of the Officers by the Olive gang in Devil's Gap Canon, December 10, 1878, and taking their prisoners, Mitchell and Ketchum, who were on their way to Custer County for trial. They were hung and burned.





The Cowboys crossing ford near Old Olive Ranch,  
on their way to Devil's Gap.

that they could accompany their clients. As Gillan was a sheriff, and his desperate character was unknown to Darnell and Calkins, they thought everything was all right. Nevertheless they kept their eyes on the jail to prevent any attempt to remove the prisoners by stealth. On the forenoon of December 10th, Darnell, fearing that the prisoners were about to be taken away, kept close watch until the west bound emigrant train came in. After its arrival at Kearney he waited at the depot until he thought it was about time for it to pull out, when he started to leave. In the meantime Gillan had taken the prisoners from the jail and hustled them into a car just as the train was pulling out. Darnell telegraphed to Gillan at Elm Creek, asking him if he would hold the prisoners at Plum Creek until the next train. Gillan replied that he would do so. Darnell also telegraphed to Captain McNamar, an attorney at Plum Creek, requesting him to see what was done with the prisoners when they got off the train at that city. Plum Creek was the home of I. P. Olive, and here he was surrounded by many friends and employes. The train pulled into Plum Creek about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and Olive and his friends were waiting at the depot with wagons, into one of which the prisoners were immediately loaded, and a start made to Custer county. Captain McNamar was unable to prevail on Gillan and Olive to wait for the arrival of Darnell from Kearney, and believing it was the intention to murder Mitchell and Ketchum, he followed the wagon train for some distance. Seeing that they were being followed, the wagons separated, but McNamar kept after the one containing the prisoners until it became so dark





Hanging of Mitchell and Ketchum by the Olive gang, December 10, 1878. Olive rode up, saying to Mitchell:  
"I will shoot you as you did my brother."

that he lost the trail among the hills. The Olive party kept on all night until they met on the South Loup, about five miles from the Olive ranch, where the transfer of the prisoners from Gillan to Olive took place. The names of the men who received the prisoners were Dennis Gartrell, Pedro Dominicus and Bion Brown. After the delivery of the prisoners to Olive's men, Sheriff Gillan and Phil Dufrand walked away a short distance while the Olive men started with the prisoners to a place known as the "Devil's Gap," in a wild canon about half way between the Loup and Wood River valleys, some five miles southeast of where Callaway now stands. Olive and Gartrell drove the wagon containing the prisoners, and they stopped under a small elm tree. A couple of ropes were passed over a limb and Gartrell tied one of them around Ketchum's neck, while Pedro Dominicus fastened the other around the neck of Mitchell. Ketchum was first drawn up. Olive then took a rifle and shot Mitchell, after which he also was drawn up until he dangled beside his companion. The bodies of the two unfortunate men were found at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the following day by a party of men, among whom were Captain McNamar, Anton Abel, Louis Wamsgan, George Sandford, Al Wise, County Judge Boblitz and perhaps others. When found the bodies were frightfully burned, that of Ketchum still hanging to the limb, while that of Mitchell was resting on the ground, the rope by which he had been suspended having either been broken or burned in two. The men were handcuffed together, one of Mitchell's arms being drawn up to Ketchum by the handcuffs, while the other was burned off to the shoulder. It was a sickening sight, and Captain McNamar returned to Plum Creek and reported what he had seen.

After hanging Mitchell and Ketchum, the Olive gang rode about one mile toward the Olive ranch, where two of the men were given fresh horses with which to return to Plum Creek. It will probably never be known who did the burning of the bodies, or how the same was done, but it is generally supposed that these two men, crazed with drink and fired with the thought of revenge for the killing of one of their number, resolved to put the finishing touch on the terrible night's work by pouring the contents of their liquor flasks over the hanging bodies of their victims and setting them on fire, as they had to pass by that road to get back to Plum Creek. The evidence at the trial was convincing that the bodies had been burned, although an attempt was made to prove that Mitchell's clothing had caught fire from the powder of Olive's gun, and although it had been put out, it caught again after the men departed from the spot. A careful examination of the spot disclosed the fact that the fire had been carefully whipped out for quite a circle around the bodies, thus proving that some one must have been present during the

burning; otherwise the whole country would have been burned over, as the grass was as dry as tinder. It does not appear, however, that Olive was a party to, or had any knowledge of, this part of the crime.

Steps were immediately taken to arrest the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to speedy justice. The whole state was horror stricken at the sickening details of the tragedy, but the well-known desperate character of most of the men concerned in it made the question of apprehending them a very serious one. Judge William Gaslin thus relates the methods employed to arrest the criminals:

"I first heard of the lynching of Mitchell and Ketchum while on a train on my way from Nebraska City to Sidney, where I was to open court the next morning. When I opened court there was such an excitement that there was no disposition or readiness to do business, and upon seeing an article in the newspaper published at Kearney by the Eaton's, denouncing the governor for not taking active steps to bring about the arrest of the murderers, and complimenting me by saying that there was one man in Nebraska who would see that the perpetrators of the crime would be brought to justice, and the man was Gaslin, I called my reporter, F. M. Hallowell, who resided at Kearney, and instructed him to proceed to that city on the first train and tell Eaton not to make further mention of my name in connection with the matter, as I had a plan to capture the desperadoes and did not want my name mentioned for fear of putting them on their guard. Late that afternoon I adjourned court and took the train east for Plum Creek, where quite a number of the Olive gang lived. I found assembled at the residence of Attorney General Dilworth a number of the law-abiding citizens of the city, armed to protect themselves against the outlaws who had threatened the lives of those who should attempt to bring them to justice. Among these I now recall Captain McNamar, an attorney, and Jack MacColl, clerk of the District Court. I learned that all the officials of Custer county, where the lynching was done, either belonged to, or were under the influence of, the Olive gang, and as they could not be moved against by or through any of the officials of that county, I left on the first train for Kearney to look up the law and see if I, as an examining magistrate, could not issue warrants for their arrest, which plan I divulged to no one. I was in constant touch with General Dilworth, and soon satisfied myself that I had the authority and set to work preparing complaints and warrants to have the outlaws arrested. After I had matured my plan I met J. P. Johnson (still residing in Kearney, three score and ten, hale and hearty), and in conversation he remarked that if the officers were afraid to arrest the criminals he would furnish men to do it if I would deputize them. I informed him that I had con-



fidentially arranged for a meeting of the sheriffs of Dawson and Buffalo counties, General Dilworth and a sacred few others, and invited him to attend. There were present at this meeting, in Judge Savidge's office, the judge, J. P. Johnson, General Dilworth, the two sheriffs and myself. I told these men the conclusion I had come to, and the complaints having been filed before me, I made out the wararnts for the arrest of the criminals and offered them to Sheriff James of Dawson county, and Sheriff Anderson of Buffalo county, and both declined to take or serve them on account of a fear of their lives, as they said. I then turned to Johnson and asked him to give me the names of the men he agreed to furnish, which he did, and I deputized them, there being, I think, five or six of them, and gave them to Johnson for delivery. One of the men deputized was Lawrence Ketchum, a brother of the man who was lynched, and another was a powerful young fellow by the name of Young, a deputy sheriff of Clay county. A third was named Pingree, and the fourth was a man from Illinois. A plan was arranged in strictest secrecy for a part of the men deputized to go across the country to Custer county to arrest part of the gang who were at the Olive ranch. Another party was to board a freight train at Kearney about midnight, which arrived at Plum Creek a little before daylight. The railroad people were in the secret and stopped the train a little before Plum Creek was reached, where the officers left the train and walked into town, where they effected the arrest of all the gang who were in the city. Lawrence Ketchum, Bob French and others went from Kearney, and were assisted by some of the constables of Plum Creek. When the other party arrived at the Olive ranch they found that the men they were after had fled the country. Among them was the delectable Barney Gillan, sheriff of Keith county, who had delivered Mitchell and Ketchum over to the murderers, and who secured the \$700 blood money paid by Olive. On the afternoon of Sunday the parties who arrested the desperadoes at Plum Creek landed them in Kearney on a freight train, where they were put in jail and a strong guard placed over them. Thousands of people were at the train when it arrived with the prisoners. Some of the prisoners, I think, were subsequently taken to the state prison for safe keeping until the April term of the District Court in Adams county, where the trial had been set, the prisoners waiving preliminary examination before me. All kinds of lawyers, good, bad and indifferent, were employed by the defense, some for ability and legal lore, and some to insult and bulldoze the court—for which they occasionally got fined for contempt. The trial had not progressed long before the prosecuting attorney secretly informed me that he had made a secret arrangement with one of the prisoners, Bion Brown, to turn state's evidence, to testify on behalf of the prose-



ection. Brown was in jail with the other defendants, heard and knew all their plans, and daily communicated the same to General Dilworth, the prosecuting attorney. He said at one time that they talked of having their friends, who were in disguise in the town, shoot General Dilworth and me and have horses ready for the prisoners, who would be enabled to escape in the excitement. I then gave orders for no one to occupy the gallery opposite where I sat, and I had a large number of bailiffs secretly heavily armed scattered over the court room, with nothing to indicate they were officers. One day it was reported that a number of the Texas friends of the prisoners were secreted in the hills near the Platte river, armed to the teeth, and provided with good horses with which to swoop down on the court and liberate the prisoners. Other things came to the knowledge of Sheriff Lewis Martin of Adams county, a most excellent officer, which induced him to procure a company of regulars from Omaha, which was sent by the commanding officer as soon as possible. The soldiers were tented on the public square of Hastings, opposite the hall where the court was being held. The Legislature appropriated \$20,000 to be expended in the prosecution of the case, to be paid out on vouchers approved by me, a part of the money being paid for the subsistence of the soldiers. Bion Brown and Pedro, the Mexican, were used as witnesses for the prosecution, the latter testifying through an interpreter. A better witness I never heard testify. On cross-examination he testified almost, if not exactly, to what he did in direct.

"The trial commenced in Hastings in April and continued almost through the month. Some of the ablest lawyers of the state were engaged on the case, among them being General Dilworth, the prosecuting attorney; District Attorney Scofield and John M. Thurston, for the state; and F. G. Hamer, General Connor and Hon. James Laird for the defense. An indictment was found against Ira P. Olive and eleven others for the murder of Luther Mitchell, and I. P. Olive and Fred Fisher were placed on trial to answer for the crime. There were about 100 witnesses, among whom we find the names of Captain McNamar, Anton Abel, Louis Wansgan, James Kelly, Phil Dufrand, George Sandford, A. C. Woodworth, David Blackman, George Arnold, Sheriff O'Brien, Dan Haskell, James Gray, H. C. Stuckey, S. C. Stuckey, John Myers, Andrew Pancake, E. S. Finch, W. H. Kilgore and S. R. Ritchie. Phil Dufrand and Bion Brown, two of the defendants, turned state's evidence and testified against their associates in the crime. The witnesses for the prosecution testified to the facts substantially as heretofore related, while the witnesses for the defense confined themselves to testifying as to the good character and reputation of I. P. Olive. As a sample of the testimony offered by the prosecution the following may be interesting:

Captain McNamar sworn: Reside in Plum Creek. Resided there December 10, 1878. Knew Mitchell. He is dead. Saw him at Plum Creek handcuffed. A. W. Ketchum and Barney Gillan were with him. This was somewhere between 12 and 2 o'clock. Saw Olive at Plum Creek. Am acquainted with him. This is Mr. Olive (pointing to prisoner.) Saw Mr. Olive on that day getting off the train. No one was with him but Mr. Fisher. Each went towards his own home. Fisher was going toward the train when he met Olive. Don't think I had any conversation with Olive that night in regard to taking prisoners out to Custer. Had no conversation with Gillan about prisoners in his presence. Mitchell and Ketchum stayed in town about an hour. Saw Mitchell get in buggy with Ketchum and Dufrand and start north towards Olive's ranch. Know where Olive's ranch is. I have been there. It is north of Plum Creek. The buggy went in the same direction. I drove along immediately behind the buggy for several miles. Last time I saw Mitchell was at the house of McLean. We stopped there a few minutes, then drove on north towards Olive's ranch. Think it was between 2 and 3 o'clock when we left Plum Creek. Was about fifteen miles north of Plum Creek when it became dark. Lost sight of them about four miles further on. It was then getting very dark. Had not seen Olive up to this time. When twenty miles from Plum Creek I noticed three men on horseback on my right riding slowly. It startled me a little at first, not expecting anything. They were riding close together. The foremost man was Mr. Olive, here. Saw Olive next morning at his ranch in Custer county. This is fifteen miles from where I saw him the night before. I think Mr. Olive's ranch is forty-five or fifty miles from Plum Creek. Think it was about 9 o'clock when I saw him. It may have been earlier. I had conversation with Olive concerning the whereabouts of Mitchell. I asked him where the prisoners were. His first answer, as I recollect it, was that he didn't know. The next was that the prisoners had got away and perhaps had gone to Kearney. Saw Boblits, the county judge, and asked him where the prisoners were. He said they had gone to Plum Creek. Mr. Boblits, Louis Wamsgan, Al Wise and myself searched for them. Found them in a canon in the vicinity of Devil's Gap, about a mile and a half from Abel's ranch. They were about a mile and a half from the road. Mitchell and Ketchum were both dead. Mitchell's body was partly on the ground, down on the lower limbs. The body was held upright by the chain of handcuff. Over the head of Mitchell was a rope hanging from the limb of the tree. The lower portion of the rope was burned off. The body was burned black. In some places the body was cracked open, I suppose by the effects of fire. The clothing was burned off. On the ground under the body of Ketchum, which was still hanging, were black ashes and

more or less cinders, and under the body of Mitchell were embers covering three or four feet of ground in diameter. The lower limbs were down in these embers. Blood was oozing from his mouth.



Showing the Burned Bodies of Mitchell and Ketchum, as Photographed after being brought to Kearney.

George Sandford sworn: Live in Custer county. Reside at the house of Mr. Anton Abel. I was with the party that found the bodies of Mitchell and Ketchum. I first found the bodies. Mr. McNamar was about 200 yards behind me. I can describe the position in which the bodies were. Mr. Ketchum was hanging to a tree with a rope around his neck; his head was about a foot from the limb to which he was tied and his feet were about two or two and a half feet from the ground; Mr. Mitchell was in a kind of sitting position; his hands were fastened to the hands of Ketchum by a pair of iron handcuffs. The rope that was over the body of Mitchell was a new rope and hung down about a foot from the limb. It had been burned off. The body of Mitchell was very badly burned; one boot was burned almost entirely off. His body was burned to a crisp. The leg that was under the body was burned most; I think it was his right leg. The leg that was not under him was burned a little, but not so much as the other. There were some pieces of woolen cloth on the body of Mitchell, and the arm that was up and was fastened to Ketchum had some clothing on it. I think there was a part of one of the pants legs in one of his boots. Mitchell was burned to a crisp down to his knees. The clothing of Ketchum was all burned off except some pieces

of clothing in his boots; maybe some on one arm. The wolves had gnawed some of the body of Mitchell, that is after we first saw them. The place of the burning was one and a half miles from Anton Abel's, two and a half miles from Olive's ranch, and about six miles from Durfee's ranch. It is



I. P. OLIVE



FREDRICK FISHER

four and a half miles from Olive's ranch to Durfee's ranch. Mr. Abel, Mr. Wamsgan, Mr. McNamar, Mr. Boblits, Mr. Wise and myself were the party that found the bodies. All on horseback except Mr. McNamar; he was in his buggy. It was 2 o'clock when we started to look for the bodies and in about twenty minutes I ran onto them. The court house in Custer is a little over two miles from Olive's ranch. Olive's ranch is up the river from the court house. Boblits and Wise came from the direction of the court house. Don't know whether they came from Custer or not. The bodies were some twenty rods from the road. The grass exactly under the bodies was not burned. It was burned off about three feet around. I examined the ashes under the bodies as far as I knew how. There were no wood ashes there to the best of my knowledge. There was plenty of wood near by. This place was on the road from Plum Creek to Custer. It is known as the Abel road. The road here runs in a canon all along, and the bodies were in a draw running to one side of this canon. There were cracks on the bodies, but I don't think any gashes. I think they were caused by the frost. It was on the 11th of December when we discovered the bodies. The coroner's inquest was held on the 16th of December.



The arguments of the attorneys were lengthy, able and eloquent, and the case was given to the jury on the evening of April 16th. A verdict was arrived at before morning to the effect that I. P. Olive and Fred Fisher were guilty of murder in the second degree. Judge Gaslin immediately sentenced them to the penitentiary for the rest of their natural lives, to which place they were taken.

On the same day, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Judge Gaslin announced that he was ready to proceed with the trial of the other members of the gang, but it is not deemed necessary to give any further account of the same here.

In conclusion, the following sketch of the Olive family, which we copy from a file of the Omaha Republican printed during the great trial at Hastings, may be of interest to the reader:

James Olive and wife are now at Plum Creek, having arrived from Texas a few days since. The couple are quite old, and deeply grieved over the recent troubles that have been recently visited upon the family. Mr. Olive is seventy-nine years of age, and his companion a few years his junior. They removed from Louisiana to Texas shortly after the close of the Mexican war, and have ever since made their home in Williamson county of that state. Before going to Texas he was a farmer, but afterwards went into stock quite extensively. His boys—five in number—have all been brought up to the same business. The oldest member of the family is Mrs. Wind, who now resides in Williamson county, Texas. Her husband was killed in the Confederate army and she and her children have remained at the old home ever since. I. P. Olive, commonly known as Prentice, or "Print" as he has been nicknamed, is about forty years of age and has spent most of his life in the Lone Star state. When the war broke out Prentice left home and joined a Texas regiment and remained in the rebel army until it closed. He was severely wounded at Shiloh in the thigh. Afterwards he drove a mule team with the army until the fight before Vicksburg, where he was captured and shortly paroled. After the exchange of prisoners was effected he returned to duty and with his regiment was detailed to garrison duty at Galveston and there remained until the close of the war. Returning to Williamson county he again engaged in stock raising. His brother, Ira, the next son in age, remained at home throughout the conflict and took care of the stock. The entire family were in strong sympathy with the southern cause, but no others were in the army. In 1866 I. P. Olive was married to Miss Louisa Reno, the daughter of a small farmer and stock dealer, who was an orphan living with her grandfather. By her he has become the father of seven

children, five of whom are living. The entire family are in Hastings at present.

The father and boys bought considerable stock at the close of the war and had gathered together a considerable property. Each of the three, Prentice, Thomas and Ira, and the father had a small farm, and some distance from their farms they had established a range and a ranch. They had separate brands, but seemed to have worked together for the common good of each other.

In the spring of 1870, I. P. Olive and his brother, Ira, accompanied by a hired man, started on a cattle drive. Several miles from home they met a man named Fream and two companions who had some Olive cattle in a herd they were driving. The Olives cut their stock from the herd, and Prentice Olive and Fream passed a few harsh and threatening words. Both men were quite angry when they separated, but no demonstrations of violence occurred. Some days after, Bob Olive—afterwards known in Nebraska as Stevens—in passing through a ravine, was fired upon by two parties who he told his brother were Fream and one of the two companions above named. Being unarmed, and a mere boy of fifteen, he made no resistance, but rode rapidly to his brother, Prentice's, home. A few days more elapsed when Fream and I. P. Olive met, the former being accompanied by a man named Whitehead. All were on horseback. Olive accosted Fream with the question:

"Did you shoot at my brother, Bob?" "No, but I'd like d—n well to take a pop at you," was the prompt rejoinder. At this both men drew their revolvers and fired. In the fracas both men were badly wounded. Olive was several years in recovering and Fream died a short time after. At the term of court following this event Olive was indicted, and at the next term of court was tried and acquitted.

In 1876 Prentice Olive and his two brothers, Thomas and Ira, in early summer, were sleeping on the prairie outside their ranch, with two white men and two negroes, after a hard day's work branding some recently purchased cattle. About 1 o'clock their ranch was burned and the company fired upon. Thomas was fatally wounded, being struck in several places by buckshot. One of the negroes sustained some injuries also, but the remaining five were unhurt. They returned the fire at random, with what effect they never knew.

This was the origin of their Texas troubles. Prior to this time they had had no serious difficulty except with the man Fream. But this was the beginning of a series of very unhappy events. Some parties headed by one Crow, an escaped convict, had been stealing cattle and occasioning considerable trouble in the country, and the Olives were expecting further trouble

with them, but were taken unawares at this time. They immediately concluded that the party that attacked their ranch was headed by Crow. It afterwards transpired that a band known as the Smith party armed themselves and gave it out that they feared the Olives. From this and other circumstances the Olives concluded the Smith party had attacked them, but have never been fully convinced of the fact. The death of their brother roused a feeling of revenge, and Prentice and Robert both kept themselves on the watch for the murderers. One day Olive's residence was visited by two negroes on horseback, one named Donaldson and the other Banks. They had pistols strapped to their saddles, and as it was then against the law to carry weapons, his suspicion was excited. He went to the house, got his rifle, and placed himself between the negroes, who were at the well, and their ponies. They started for their horses, when Olive covered them and demanded a halt. They said they were hunting stolen horses, but had inquired of Mrs. Olive for her husband. Olive claims to have believed that they were sent there to take his life. The negroes did not heed his command that they should not go to their horses, which was repeated the third time. Finally Banks made a spring for his horse, and Olive shot him dead. The other surrendered. Olive was tried within a month and acquitted. The next spring he came north to Cheyenne and the fall following settled at Plum Creek.

Ira Olive is younger by ten years than his brother, Prentice, and also younger than the dead brother, Thomas. He was raised in Williamson county, Texas, since his birth, and has made cattle raising his occupation since his boyhood. He is the owner of a large herd of cattle alone, and in partnership with I. P. has other stock. At this time he has a herd of 1,000 horses northward bound. This gentleman has been more even tempered than his brothers, Print and Bob, and never had any shooting scrapes, and never had a lawsuit in his life. He is here attending the trial at present, and has brought his family north. They are at Plum Creek.

Robert Olive, who was killed by Ketchum or Mitchell last winter in Custer county, was twenty-four years old the very day of his death. He seems to have been the most reckless boy in the family. Rash, wrong-headed and daring, but also generous and reliable as a business man and as a friend. He left Texas with two murders to his charge and was shortly indicted and a reward of \$400 offered for his capture. He killed Cal Nutt in a saloon in November or December about four years ago. Nutt and he had been drinking together. After a time Robert stated that he must leave. As the two stood talking to each other Nutt fired at his companion, putting a ball through his vest, but not inflicting a wound. The fire was quickly returned, and Nutt fell back into the saloon dead, with two balls piercing his vitals. Nutt is supposed

by the Olives to have been a member of the gang that killed Thomas, or was engaged by them to kill Robert, who had vowed vengeance upon the murderers of his brother.

Six months prior to this he shot and killed a negro, who he claimed was stealing corn from his crib. He was not even bound over for this offense. After killing Nutt he left almost immediately for Cheyenne, where he assumed the name of Stevens and worked for a cattle man named Carny. It was his intention to go back and stand trial for those two crimes had he not been killed. The brothers, Ira and Prentice advised him to take the step he took, that of coming north under an assumed name. They did it rather than bear the expenses of the trial. The body of Robert was taken to the old home in Texas and interred in the Methodist church yard by the side of Thomas. The father and mother and three sisters have long been members of the Methodist church, and for years worshiped in this church. None of the boys have ever taken kindly to religion, however. The youngest Olive boy is about eighteen years old and is called Marion. He is now on his way from Texas with the herd of horses above referred to.

Immediately after the sentence of Olive and Fisher their friends began proceedings for their release. The following year their efforts were successful, the Supreme Court handing down a decision to the effect that the prisoners had a right to trial in the county where the crime charged against them was committed. This not having been done, the prisoners were sent to Custer county for trial. Custer county had recently been organized from territory that had formerly been in two different judicial districts. The court held that the county was not now in any judicial district, and consequently the prisoners could not be tried before any district judge. This was the decision of two of the Supreme judges, but Judge Samuel Maxwell, the third member of the court, dissented from this view in what is said to be one of the ablest legal documents ever prepared in the Supreme Court of Nebraska.

Under this decision the only court having jurisdiction over the case was the County Court. Accordingly Olive and Fisher were brought before Judge E. J. Boblitz, but from some mysterious cause no complaining witnesses put in an appearance and the prisoners were discharged.

The county judge's docket at that time was kept in an account book, and the court proceedings are mixed up with notes of sales and purchases of calves, steers and cows, together with memoranda of expenses for hay, barbed wire and other ranch requisites. The following, which we find on the same page with some items of expense incurred in the plastering of the judge's house shows the disposition that was made of the celebrated Olive case:



STATE OF NEBRASKA, }  
Custer County, } ss.

In County Court Before E. J. Boblits, County Judge.

I. P. Olive, W. F. Fisher, in custody of Sheriff O'Brien, the court finding no complaint on county docket and no complaining witnesses, the court orders that the prisoners be discharged till further proceedings can be had.

This 17th day of December, 1880.

E. J. BOBLITS, County Judge.

The decision of the Supreme Court of course put an end to the proceedings against the other defendants, but in the meantime most of them had been allowed to escape from the various jails in which they had been confined, and as far as we know Olive and Fisher were the only ones that ever had to do any time in the penitentiary for participating in the Mitchell and Ketchum tragedy.

It is said by parties who claim to know the facts that from the day of his release from the penitentiary I. P. Olive was a marked man, and that he was followed from place to place by a man whose only object in life seemed to be the killing of his enemy. This man had also trained his son to hate the name of Olive, and as he grew up he shared with his father the hatred thus instilled into his mind. Olive also had a son about the same age as the son of the man who dogged his steps awaiting only a favorable opportunity to wreak vengeance. At last, four years after the release, I. P. Olive and his son, William, were in Colorado. One evening young Olive had a quarrel with a stranger over a game of billiards and was shot dead. The next day, while the elder Olive was participating in a round-up of some cattle, he got into a quarrel with a man disguised as a cowboy and was instantly killed while trying to draw his revolver.

Thus ended the last act of a drama of blood which is unequalled in the annals of crime in the great west.



## Blazing a Pathway and Personal Pioneer Experiences.

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J. D. Strong.

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In every new undertaking in life, whether political, religious, or social reform, or the opening up of some new and untried commercial avenue, or settling and establishing homes in a new country, the most picturesque and interesting character is always the pioneer—the one who blazes the pathway.



J. D. STRONG.

It is said that England's people are divided into two classes—royalty, and the rest of the people. American history is made up of two classes—the pioneer and the rest of the people.

The pioneer is in a class all by himself; he is the advance guard in every great enterprise; he is on the "firing line" in every contest; a stranger to defeat and upon intimate terms with victory, no matter how long deferred. In the settlement of America his ax awakened the first rude echoes of the woodman's craft in the primeval forests of the East and of the South. His rude bark first rode the waves of the great lakes, searched into their bays

and inlets, and reared rude homes on their murmuring shores. His plow first turned the rich, black loam of the middle west, and made it yield supplies for the wants of many. His feet first left a white man's trail upon the arid



Blazing a Pathway.

sands of the "Great American Desert," and his courage and skill turned it into a "land of plenty."

Undaunted and undismayed, he found his way through treacherous passes and over snow-clad summits of the Rockies, and at his magic touch they yielded up their precious metals. Cities, towns and railroads appeared in every valley, like the realization of some magician's dream.

Thus from shore to shore of this mighty continent went the pioneers of civilization, the heroes of border strifes, the men and women who "blazed the pathway" for the actual settler, who followed to find a home and independence.

It was in May, 1882, after the first pioneers had made a dim, shadowy trail, that I first found my way over the border into Custer county. I use the word "found" properly, for it was an actual discovery of a most difficult way into the then promised land.

In company with John M. Morrison I left the main road leading from Kearney to this upper country at a point in Buffalo county, in Pleasant valley, and went north through the hills, following a very dim trail which persisted in growing dimmer, and which, as darkness came on, disappeared altogether. Our hope was to reach McEndeffer's on the Muddy that night,

so we pressed on, over high hills and down long, winding canons, one of us walking in front of the team to figure out the trail, and the other driving as directed by the guide.

A more gloomy and desolate prospect could hardly be imagined than that presented to us as the shades of night began to come down over the brown prairie, tumbled and piled about in the most hap-hazard manner; high hills, long and terraced ridges, each line seeming higher than the other, two "tenderfeet" alone amidst all this waste, was enough to make one wish himself back to civilization again.

After some hours—or ages, I can hardly tell which—we began to see cattle and horses on the range, which gave us hope. We soon struck a broader trail, made by the stock, leading to the ranch, and had less difficulty in keeping in the way. After a time I saw something just ahead of me in the darkness that I took for a post, and believing we had come to a fence, I walked up to it and felt on both sides for the wires, but finding none, I put my hand on top of the supposed post and discovered to my dismay that it was a stovepipe, and still warm.

By the time my investigations had resulted in this warm discovery, Morrison had driven the team up quite close to me and demanded a reason for my stop. I explained the nature of my find, and suggested a careful backing up of the team for fear of a tumble through the roof, which would be likely to disturb the sleepers below. I had seen enough of "dugouts" to know that we had discovered one, but just how to get inside I did not yet know. After getting the team out of all possible danger, I started on a voyage of discovery. The problem of the lay of the dugout was soon solved to the satisfaction of all concerned. Of course it was dug out of a bank, but just where the bank ended and the house united with it I could not make out in the darkness; but I soon discovered that there was a space of about four feet between the end of the dugout—which had a wall of logs at the end—and the bank which sloped towards the house. The way I discovered this opening was by the happy one of falling into it, and the way I gained admittance into the house was by rolling down the sloping bank and in at the window, and the way I aroused the household was by alighting on a promiscuous collection of tinware, which made noise enough to stampede a bunch of plow horses.

From the time I had started across the hills with the intention of asking the hospitality of Mr. McEndeffer's roof and board for the night, it had been with misgivings, if not with fear, as it will be remembered that he had been in some measure connected with the Olives in their fight with Mitchell and Ketchum. He was a cattleman, and his interests were not enhanced by the settlers. What were my feelings to find myself precipitated in this fashion



into his house and finding myself clawing and kicking around among the dish pans and milk pails, while a gruff voice was demanding: "Who's there?" "Get out!" "Scat!" "Get a light!" "Get the gun!" and like exclamatory remarks, interspersed with more or less profanity and a chorus chiming in from other members of the family?

Had the team fallen through the roof it would have raised no greater row than did my plunge through the window. But I finally extricated myself from the tinware, kettles and frying pans, and beat a hasty retreat under cover of the darkness and the excitement of the enemy out through the window and around to the door, where I gave a loud rap, more in accord with



C. D. Pelham. First Hotel and Store in Broken Bow.

civilized ways, and when a light was procured and explanations made, and an inventory taken of the kitchen utensils to find what actual damage was done, we were made welcome, and as the ceremony of "breaking the ice" was not necessary after breaking my head and a milk crock, McEndeffer's cob pipe and several other articles of less importance, we were soon comfortable and quite at home.

The next day our journey was uneventful, and we put up for the night with C. D. Pelham at or near where the present city of Broken Bow stands. Pelham kept the postoffice and a small stock of groceries, and I might say the first hotel in Broken Bow. We had often seen the puzzle of the innkeeper who could put thirteen men in twelve rooms, but Pelham could discount any such cheap John mathematical problems as that. He could easily stow away thirteen men in one small room. It is related of him on good authority that

he had a most ingenious way of making six blankets suffice for a dozen or more guests. When late arrivals were ready to retire they were tucked snugly away under a blanket that was deftly removed from some guest who had gone to bed earlier, and who, being fast asleep, would never know the difference. Of course if the weather was very cold the uncovered sleepers were liable to wake up after a time and make a roar, but before this stage was reached the other fellow was sound asleep and the covering was restored to the original sleeper. By shifting the covering judiciously and systematically during the night, Pelham always succeeded in keeping all of his guests as warm as a pie in the coldest winter weather, although in cases of a rush of business every one of them would be uncovered two-thirds or three-quarters of the time.

Soon after composing myself in my blankets in a comfortable manner, I felt a crawling, hopping, biting sensation that set all my nerves a-going. After turning from side to side a few times, and some feverish use of the mailed ends of the digits on both hands, I closed my eyes once more with an abiding faith in the "sleep of the just," but it was not to be. With a good, healthy, active flea with a ravenous appetite and an insatiate desire for blood, perched on every square inch of your anatomy, how could it be? Under these circumstances justice and virtue could make no plea. After considering the case in the most philosophical manner of which I was capable, I concluded to take up my bed and walk—out into the "stilly night," with the blue vault of heaven for a roof, and the glad stars to look down upon me and search out my virtuous soul—and register the wrongs inflicted upon me by the "madding crowd" I fondly hoped I had left behind me, but it was not to be. If the stars saw any wrongs to record, they have not made the record known, and in the meantime the fleas held undisputed possession of my blankets. I soon abandoned them and sought the top board of a pile of lumber and lay down to sleep while the fleas huddled up to one another in my abandoned bed clothes.

This, gentle reader, was my first experience with fleas. I had to learn that the flea was the aborigine of this new country, and that he was on the warpath, that he was a common nuisance, and an enemy of the settler. I had to learn that he would spill alike the blood of high and low degree, that he would bring to naught the pride of the haughty, vex the soul of the virtuous and cause to swear the pious. He was that common danger which brought all men—and, I might say, women also, as he was neither respecter of persons nor of gender—to a common level. He annihilated caste and class distinction, and brought all down to the industrious plane of himself, for all had to scratch, and scratch we did, whether in the seclusion of our own private

apartments, or in the brilliantly lighted room where youth and beauty had met, or in the pew or pulpit at church. All had to scratch, and it was not considered impolite to scratch any particular part of your anatomy that happened to be bitten.

My only excuse for making such an extended reference to this most amusing little pest is the fact that no true history of Custer county could be written without giving him some notice. To the early settler he was all and much more than I have made him; but, like the aborigines of other countries, he has departed with the conditions that made this his natural home.

The next morning we started for Merna, and at noon of that day we stood upon a hill that overlooked the beautiful valley that was to be our future home. Merna, at that time, consisted of one small sod house, with an annex of one room. The sod house was filled with sundry articles of merchandise, such as tobacco, soap, codfish, buttons and thread. A cubby hole in the wall served as the postoffice, and was kept by W. G. Brotherton. The annex was occupied by Mr. Brotherton and his wife as a living room, and was presided over by Lizzie, whose chief business seemed to be looking after the wants of new arrivals and making them comfortable and happy.

One-half mile north of Brotherton's store, and the site of the future lively little railroad town of Merna, we struck our tent on claims previously bought of Samuel N. Dunning and Floyd Field. Mr. Dunning had located farther north, on the Dismal river, going into the cattle business. When the B. & M. railroad was extended through the Black Hills, a town was located near his home and given the name of Dunning, which perpetuates the name of one of Custer county's pioneers. Floyd Field also located on the Dismal river, or on the Loup, I have forgotten which, and from a modest beginning in the cattle industry, he and his brother, Fred, have grown into two of the wealthiest ranch owners in this part of the state. I might state also, in this connection, that the postoffice of Merna was first kept by Mr. Dunning, and the name of Merna was that of his youngest daughter. After the railroad had been built, and the town finally and for all time located by the Lincoln Townsite Company, it was quite natural that the infantile city, struggling for life and metropolitan honors, should be given the name of the original postoffice, so that Merna became a fixed geographical landmark.

It will now be my duty, as a writer of chronological events connected with Merna and its immediate vicinity, to give the reader a brief and concise historical narrative of its fortunes, from its humble beginning to its present prosperous and happy condition.

First, let us note some of the "blazes" along the pathway we have fol-

lowed, and the signs that proclaimed in unmistakable language that the pioneer had preceded us, and that the influence of civilization was already finding its way into the wilderness, foretelling the rise of cities and towns and prosperous communities, with railroads, churches, schools, libraries, societies and all that goes to make up commercial, social and religious life.

One of the first way marks that I encountered, upon entering Custer county, was found in a very interesting character, and a pioneer who has left his mark upon the historical annals of the county, Major C. S. Ellison of Algernon. Major Ellison was the first chip, on the first tree, that pointed with merrying finger to the exact spot where the future flourishing city of Algernon would be built, and the name of Algernon would be forever kept green in the memory of future generations the name of the major's favorite son in Nebraska politics. By his tact, energy and a firm faith in the future, the major did succeed in building up quite a nice little inland town, giving it the name of Algernon, and for a time it promised to be the fulfillment of his long-cherished dream, but the Burlington & Missouri railroad built a line up the valley; it cared not for sentiment nor the dream of Major Ellison, but located a town on either side of Algernon, which soon left the brown prairie bare and shorn of its plumage and the name of the young city became but a memory.

I have given this brief sketch of the rise and fall of Algernon for the purpose of shedding such light upon the character of Major Ellison as will bring out in full relief this pioneer as one of the abiding way-marks to the settlement of Custer county. While his dream was not fully realized, and the town he, by his energy, actually builded, has crumbled away and become but a tradition, Major Ellison, as a forerunner and guide upon the pathway of civilization, still lives, and will, so long as a written history of the county exists.

The next way-mark that spoke in tones precluding both doubt and cavil, that we were on the highway over which civilization must pass, was found in the person of C. D. Pelham, heretofore referred to. Pelham's store and Broken Bow's postoffice is now but a leaky-roofed, sagging-walled sod memory, standing on a hill in the outskirts of the present city, with its windows and doors boarded up, given over to rats and mice. While the old soddy is a thing of the past, and is fast crumbling back to its native earth, Pelham, as a way-mark and pioneer is still here, a fact and a reality.

At Merna the store and postoffice, and in fact the whole machinery of the place, was in the hands of W. G. Brotherton, who, as a pioneer and a way-mark was a success, and at this time, nineteen years later, he is now in Merna, and persists in being an active way-mark, the only real thing in the



way of a "blaze" in the forest, an up-to-date pioneer, he refuses to let the moss of a desolated town, or the dirt and dust of an abandoned sod house to supplant him in the grateful memory of the people.

Standing at Brotherton's store in May, 1882, and looking out over the valley spreading to the west and north, one could see a few marks that indicated the beginning of a small settlement. A group of "old bachelors" off to the northwest were holding various claims in various parts of the valley, but were mostly "batching" together in Al Thomas' dugout, where they discussed the future greatness of the country, and studied the faces of the four queens they usually held in their hands, while they mentally cogitated upon an improbable consignment of femininity to be shipped out to supply wives for this miscellaneous assortment of masculinity.

It is only justice to these men who cut such a sorry figure at stag house-keeping, to say that they were all men of liberal education and refined tastes, and to leave behind them the influence of eastern homes and the society of women were the worst hardships they had to endure in the wild west.

Most of them in time found good wives, who have helped them to make comfortable and happy homes. In this bachelor dive were Al Thomas, Joe Sitler, A. Sommers, John Jacquot, Len Thomas, Charles Thomas, Scott, Hanna, McWorthy and others whose names I do not now recall.

At this time had one looked inside all of the houses within a radius of five miles from Brotherton's store, he would have found but three women within the entire circle—Mrs. C. P. Foote, Mrs. Brotherton and Mrs. Dunning. What we lacked in quantity, however, we made up in quality, for no new settlement was ever blest with better women to mother the community than this trinity of maternal excellence. They have all gone on before to another country, but the blessings of all early settlers in this vicinity will follow them.

In the spring of 1883 our town took a boom. D. S. Lohr put up a frame building south of Brotherton's store, and hope ran high as imagination pictured a growing city, but it proved a delusion, for Lohr soon moved his store, building and all, some five miles up the valley, where he founded the town of Dale.

This led to the formation of a townsite company at Merna, and a town was located and laid out on section 36, two miles northwest of Brotherton's store, and within three miles of Dale. Authority was granted by the post-office department at Washington to move the postoffice to the new site. Mr. Brotherton formed a partnership with Milton Casteel and J. D. Strong and a great department store was opened. W. E. Warren built a shack and hung out a mortar and pestle, which indicated to all concerned that he had a

fresh assortment of drugs and a limited supply of stomach bitters for sale. If the business side of these ventures is not a pleasant memory to the gentlemen concerned, the old croquet ground and the old sod town hall, which came into existence through their untiring energy, will always be an oasis in that desert of uncertain business prosperity.



C. P. Foote's Old Pioneer House at Merna, Neb. Mr. Foote, at this time, was Sheriff of Custer County.

Later, a blacksmith shop, a frame hotel, and another store made their appearance, but to-day the old townsite is plowed as a field and yields its store of grain to feed Custer county's helpless poor, as it is a part of the county poor farm.

During the summer and fall of 1886 the B. & M. railroad was extended from Grand Island to Alliance, and the Lincoln Townsite Company purchased Brotherton's old claim and relocated Merna on the site of its birth. This settled the townsite controversy and the future of Merna was assured.

The town grew rapidly into a respectable village, with many lines of trade and various industries represented. Brotherton and Warren moved from the new Merna back to the old site, and a rush of population from the East caused houses to spring up like mushrooms after a rain. Mr. Wilson was the pioneer grain dealer, building the first elevator. The business has been widened under the management of his son, L. W. Wilson, until now they buy grain at three points in the county.

The Merna bank was launched on its financial career by D. E. Johnson, who managed it one or two years, when he sold his interest to John Bair and

Mac Johnsen. That the institution has been a success is attested by that invisible something that always surrounds its popular cashier, and seem to say that prosperity is with him.

In the early days Casteel and Gulick conducted a grocery store, Marshall Eddy handled farm implements, and J. J. Stanford advertised flour and coffins for sale, apparently not seeing any incongruity in his business. Whether John expected his customers to use the coffins soon after using his flour, or whether the coffins were the necessary suggestion from the quality of the flour, he has never yet explained.

The meat market was an uncertain quantity for a number of years, but after a fitful season of meat or no meat, or who's got the meat? "Butch" (George) Davidson took hold of the meat market. That George has been successful is evident from his rotund appearance, which suggests hamburger steak for dinner every day.

The hardware and implement business is represented by Kelly and Duncan and Tim Marooney, farm implements alone by R. J. Kelly, lumber by Dierks Lumber and Coal Company, grain, flour, feed and live stock by N. Jaquot and Wilson Bros.

Mr. Jaquot is one of the pioneers, and has been closely identified with the business interests of Merna, owns and conducts two grain elevators in the county and has large land and cattle interests.

Lee Gordon conducts the Merna hotel, and Peter Forney the livery and feed stable. Leo is a Blacksmith, and Ed Brown runs a similar business in another part of the town.

J. Francis has Stanford's old stand, and while he still sells coffins, has discontinued the sale of flour and got Uncle Sam to let him keep the post-office, where he can hand out the deadly dun instead of dispensing dyspepsia-promoting high patent.

F. D. Atkisson ("Crank") conducts a large general merchandise store. Mrs. Barrett a department store, while Ben Wells hangs gracefully over the chair of a tonsorial artist when not engaged in repairing a broken finger ring or dissecting a ticker.

Dr. Downing attends to all the ills and ailments of the community, and listens with the same measure of personal interest to a long tale of suffering liver complaint that he manifests on receiving a fee from one of his delinquents.

Nine McComas conducts the drug store, and is just as happy in setting up the cigars to his many friends as he is in selling a box of liver pills.

J. J. Stanford is still in business, but contents himself by furnishing supplies only to the living through the agency of a general merchandise store.

John Menary conducts a full-grown harness shop, when not engaged in a surgical operation upon some forlorn and crippled bicycle. Mr. Jayne is the present accommodating agent of the B. & M. railway, and L. W. Wilson represents the interests of the Lincoln Land and Townsite Company.

We have noticed somewhat in detail the material growth of Merna, but material growth in a community were but indifferent success, if not accompanied by a corresponding growth in mental, moral and religious activity, as well as a perfected political system that insures personal and public safety. All these have developed and kept time and marched in perfect harmony with the material growth of the town and surrounding country.

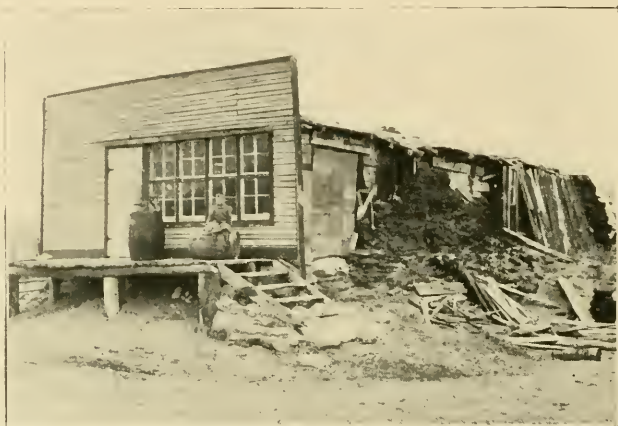
The Merna school district was formed soon after the first settlement, and a sod building was erected on the claim of Andy Sommers, the work being donated by public-spirited citizens. I think the first teacher was a Miss Mendel, afterwards Fannie Reeder. Miss Ella Purcell and others contributed to the pioneer work of "teaching the young idea how to shoot." That educational spirit has given Merna a splendid graded school, housed in a substantial two-story frame school building, with a corps of teachers second to none in the county.

If it were more difficult to sprout the moral and religious seed in the new settlements, it made no less vigorous growth when once the embryotic tree was above ground and receiving the sunlight of religious truth. In the early days the moral and religious equilibrium of the community were maintained by the heroic efforts of our pioneer preacher, Elder F. M. Graham. From an arbor made of plum brush and sunflowers in front of Brotherton's old store, where Elder Graham first preached to us, to two neat and commodious church buildings where services are maintained fifty-two weeks in the year, is the outward manifestation of the inward development of the moral and religious forces of the town and community. \* \* \* We could haul a load from Kearney for our merchants, and thus earn something to live on. The experiences of these trips were varied, sometimes disastrous, as when we broke an axle or a wheel; sometimes sad, as when some poor settler saw one horse of his team die on the road; sometimes gay and pleasant, and often ludicrous.

I recall one incident of the latter character that happened to me on one of these trips. For the benefit of the uninitiated, I must begin by saying that the "chuck box" was a most necessary and important part of the freighter's outfit. To be without your "chuck box" meant to be without your living. Stopping places there were on the road, but they provided you only with a fire to warm your chuck, and a soft spot on a dirt floor upon which to spread your blankets. What would some good housewife of the East think if, upon



making her appearance in the kitchen in the morning, she should find a half dozen or more of strange, rough, bewhiskered men using her stove and munching their "chuck" on her table with as much unconcern as if they owned the place? Yet this was the way we did, and the lady of the house waited with what patience she could for us to clear out before she attempted to prepare the morning meal for her own family.



Store Building of J. D. Stratton, at Simeon P. O., Cherry County, Neb., containing \$2,000 in goods when photo was taken.

But the inconvenience was not always confined to the family with whom we stopped. The freighter sometimes had his annoyances also. I remember one trip I made in midwinter with the mercury down below zero by several long marks. One day we failed to make our stopping place through the cold and snow until a very late hour. We ate a cold bite and rolled in our blankets for the night. We were up early in the morning, got a fire agoing in the kitchen stove and were busily engaged in thawing out our chuck, which was frozen as hard as a stone. I had placed a loaf of bread in the oven to thaw, and had my coffee made when one of the young ladies of the family appeared, pulled a chair up to the opposite side of the stove, opened the oven door, and deliberately planted her bare feet on my bread to warm them. However, I did not notice the humiliating—or shall I say honored?—position of my loaf until my traveling companion came in from attending to our horses, and we sat down to our chuck box to eat our breakfast. Then with innocent confidence I reached into the oven for my loaf, and grasped a set of warm, fat toes. I got a glimpse of that foot as it rested on my bread. It was a fat foot with short, fat, pink toes. I could have forgiven the annoyance had the foot

been an outline of grace and beauty, but to be held up for my breakfast by a fat foot with chubby pink toes, was too commonplace, so I politely demanded its surrender. Of course the young lady was surprised beyond measure. She had taken my loaf of bread for a brick—and I'm sure I took her for another.

But these early hardships were not all the early settlers were called upon to endure. The building of the railroad put an end to the freighting, but by that time farms had been broken out, and the road was as much a necessity to carry out the surplus produce as to bring in the supplies needful.

In 1890 came the first failure of corn, with but a light crop of wheat, and four years later, in 1894, that awful year that burned everything to a crisp and left nothing but desolation to confront the despairing settlers. The "starving time" at Jamestown experienced by the early settlers of Virginia was no parallel to the starving time of all western Nebraska. Coming at a time when the whole country was prostrated by a financial panic that placed in doubt the tenure of every man's worldly possessions, served to intensify the hardships and sufferings of these heroic people. Many of the reports that went out were exaggerated and untrustworthy, but the plain truth was bad enough. The suffering from actual want at that time was not by any means the real hardship experienced, but what the failure entailed in discouraging the business of the country, and the consequent poverty, that took years to overcome.

During the past two years, the erection of new houses, barns, and out-buildings in the country and towns, and the easier financial condition of the people in general, indicate that the poverty entailed by that black time, has been largely overcome, and an era of prosperity awaits those who have thus far blazed the way through many difficulties, until the purple fruits, and the milk and honey of the promised land, are awaiting the claimants of the glorious reward.

Among my personal experiences and recollections might be given an incident that occurred during the summer of 1882. Like a great many other settlers who came in the early days, when I had paid the "filing" fee on my land I had nothing left.

One of the first essentials in opening up a new farm is a team. As an excuse for such a perquisite I purchased a pair of very wild and willful bronchos of E. Taylor, who ran a ranch at the mouth of the Dismal river. While I bought the ponies without money, it was not altogether without price, and I think I could have wrapped them up in the great legal-looking document that I was called upon to execute before I came in possession of the beasts. I think "Lish" filed it somewhere in a "blowout," it is doubtful whether he could have found the county clerk's office at that time. However, it had the



The Old Pancake Horse Ranch, now owned by Mr. J. Taylor.

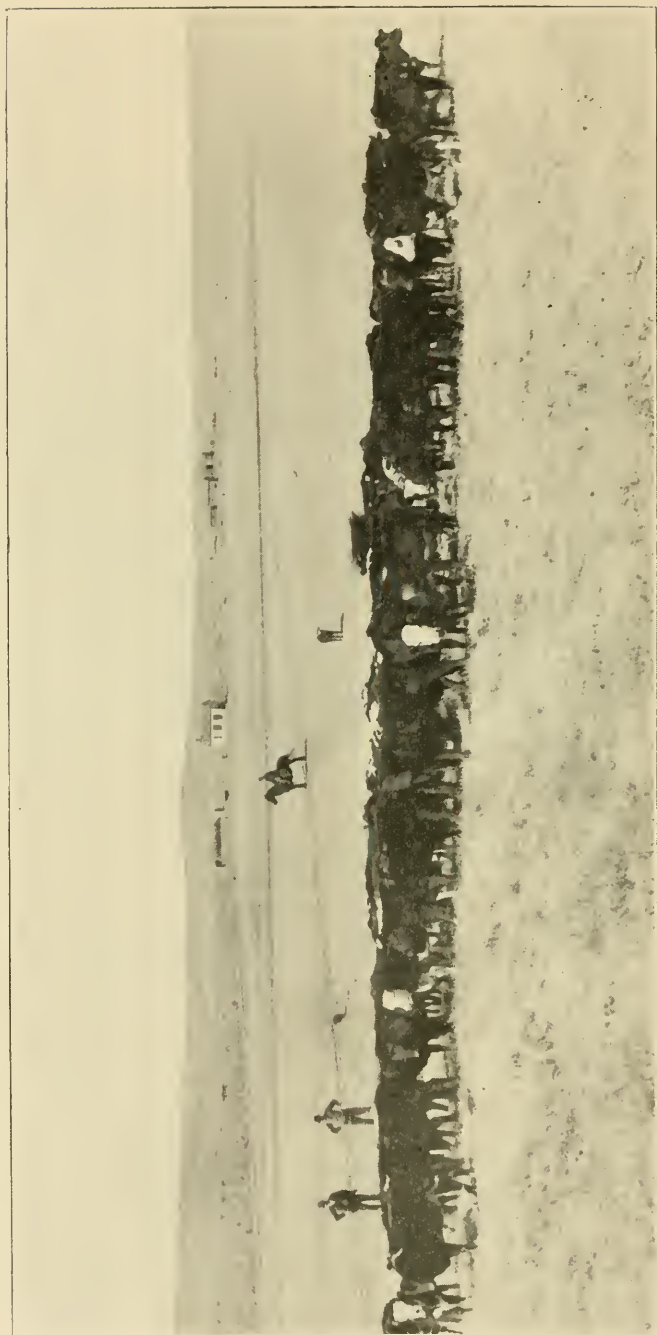
desired effect, and I got a hustle on myself to satisfy its demands. Among other difficult things I agreed to do on account of that legal-looking document, with its "party of the first part," and "assignees and executors," etc., was to work on the ranch through the haying season, and when the time came I reported there for duty. The ranch was a typical cattle ranch of that time, with few of the conveniences of civilization. The bed bugs that lurked in the cracks of the cedar logs of which the house was built, were enough to stampede a flock of cowboys—and they did, for we (I mean the cowboys and myself) took our blankets to the hay corral and slept that part of the night away that was not spent in playing "penny ante." The men at the ranch were a little rough at times, perhaps, but withal a good-hearted, jolly lot, ready at all times for any fun, particularly if there was any hazard in it. Upon one occasion when two men came up near the ranch to do some breaking where a tree claim had been located, there was a saddling of horses, filling of Winchester magazines, and ten or a dozen shadowy forms rode off in the darkness and the next morning nothing was seen of the party that

came to do the breaking. I heard afterwards that several gentlemen called on the would-be farmers, helped them to hitch up their horses and actually went a long way with them to prevent the savage men and beasts of the plains from hurting them.

One day a young man came over from Cole's horse ranch and informed us that an old man who had been working for them had died, and in justice to him they intended to bury him with the honors pertaining to civilized burials, including a funeral oration, to be delivered by David Cole. The young man further announced that as a preacher was an unknown quantity in that region, the only spiritual medium left them would be found in a two-gallon jug at the ranch, whose services would be demanded on this occasion. After these elaborate preparations had been made by the Coles and their men, it was not like these cowmen to plead any excuse for being absent from a function that would not only honor the dead but amuse and entertain the living.

Now the house on the Cole ranch was not an imposing piece of architecture, neither was it elaborate for its housekeeping appointments; one small room, a diminutive cook stove, a long-handled frying pan, a few pots and kettles, tin plates and sleeping room on the floor, or bunks nailed to the side of the room, a box that served the double purpose of a dining table and a convenience for playing cards, just about comprised the "outfit." It will readily be seen that those who had the funeral preparations in charge would meet a difficulty in these cramped quarters to carry on the ordinary affairs of the house in caring for a half dozen live cowboys, to say nothing of one dead one. The difficulty came to the point of solution when the time arrived for rolling blankets and sleep. Here were six stalwart sons of the plain who feared no man living, but not one would sleep with—as they termed it—"his giblets the corpse." Finally the problem was solved in a characteristic way by standing the corpse up in a corner and opening the door, which, when open, swung back across this corner and completely hid it from view. Therefore when the boys assembled the next day from the neighboring ranches to participate in the ceremonies the evidence of a funeral was not in a corpse present on a stretcher, but rather in the two-gallon jug on the table. Believing the story of the funeral to be a hoax to get the boys together for a big time, in which the jug was to play a prominent part, one of the visitors offered to bet a "ten" that no corpse could be shown. Of course the bet was taken and an Irishman belonging to the Cole ranch who bore the expressive name of "Reddy," closed the door and revealed the corpse standing in the corner. The evidence was prompt and convincing and the "ten" was paid over on the spot.





Ranch of J. G. Brenizer, in Fleming Valley, Southwest of Broken Bow, Neb. Mr. Brenizer is one of the largest farm owners in Custer County, furnishing thousands of bushels of wheat to his tenants for seeding his ground.

It will not be necessary to give in detail all that occurred before the old man was finally laid in a new-made grave, but with the material at hand it will be easy for the reader to complete it by a draft on his imagination. The oration of Hon. Dave Cole is said to have been a masterpiece of "liquid" eloquence. Each rounded period was punctuated by a direct reference to the jug, and a gurgling sound came from the receptacle of the spirits, which gave evidence that his appreciative audience was drinking it—that is, both the eloquence and the spirits. This was more than Dave could stand. He was willing for them to drink in his eloquence, but he drew the line at the jug.

The old man was finally laid in his grave, with a bottle on one side containing his share of the contents of the jug, and one on the other side containing a slip of paper on which was written the man's real name and the place of his former home. He had revealed both his name and his former address just before he died. He had evidently been hiding on account of some crime committed somewhere. The bottle containing his name is probably with him yet, but the bottle containing the spirits was dug up before the next morning by the boys in order to relieve a distressing thirst occasioned by the supply in the jug running short, as confessed by one of them afterwards.

These wild roysterers of the prairie concluded that the day could not be better ended than by having a little amusement at the expense of some living man. "Reddy" was the shining mark that attracted universal attention. It was well known that "Reddy" was not afraid of any man that was alive, and that he was a dangerous customer to "monkey with," but it was equally well known that he feared a ghost to the point of frenzy when his superstitious fears were aroused. A game of penny ante was started and "Reddy" and some more of the boys engaged in cards while the rest were hatching up a plot that was to be the undoing of the Irishman and fun for the boys. It was settled that as Dave Cole had acquitted himself with such credit as an orator, that he would do equally well in impersonating the ghost of the old man, and at the appointed time he was to take his place on the sand knoll by the grave, dressed in something white, that would seem to be in keeping with the accepted idea of ghostly raiment.

As the shades of evening began to steal down over the sand hills, one of the boys proposed a rest from the game for a time, while they either sang songs or told stories. "Reddy," being a singer, favored singing, but the rest, being in the plot, were in favor of story-telling, and some one was designated to begin, the first story proving to be a most gruesome tale of a ghost. The subject of ghosts being introduced, it was quite natural that each in turn should tell a ghost story also, and at the same time make it

more horrifying than the one that preceded it. Had a collection of these tales been kept and published, I am of the opinion that it would have made one of the most unique books ever placed on the market, and a classic in ghost lore. As the darkness became more intense, and the stories more blood-curdling, "Reddy's" flaming shock of hair seemed to stand on end, his mouth was wide open, and his eyes found no resting place, but searched out every dark corner with evident fear. It soon became apparent that "Reddy" was in "tone," and that his hour had arrived. Dave, feeling a little fear of "Reddy's" quick and accurate aim with his six shooter, thought best to put a question to him before retiring to do the ghost act, so he said: "Reddy, what would you do if you saw a ghost?" "Do?" said Reddy. "I would plug at it six toimes wid me gun as fast as I knew how." "Now," said Dave, "let me give you a little advice. Don't you ever draw a gun on a ghost. I knew a fellow out west that undertook to do that, and when he threw up his gun to shoot his arm withered in a second, and he never got over it." While this grave statement of Dave's might have protected him, yet it is a fact that the boys, on some pretext, managed to get Reddy's gun away from him before the ghost appeared. When everything was in readiness and Dave had taken up his position at the grave, which was but a short distance from the house, the boys began to step out one by one, and finally Reddy himself. At the moment he passed out of the door Reddy did the natural thing for him to do, that is, to look up toward the grave. Dave was just showing up as a white spot. He had covered himself with a wagon sheet, and had a ten-foot pole in his hand. The white spectre began gradually to rise, growing slowly in height until it reached its full length. It then seemed to bend toward the spectators, making a motion as if reaching for them. This was too much for Reddy. He stood as if frozen to the ground with pure horror, his mouth open, his knees knocking together, his eyes bursting from their sockets, his hair on end, and his whole being distracted until he was a sight to be pitied even by his tormentors. But when the supposed ghost appeared to be about to pick him up, the chains of fear that held him were broken, and Reddy bolted. His red head appeared like a dying meteor as it shot with incredible swiftness out into the darkness, and long after the pyrotechnics afforded by his flaming top knot had passed from sight, Reddy's feet could be heard pounding the sand hills in a flight so ludicrous that the rest of the boys fairly yelled with uncontrolled delight.

Perhaps to the refined tastes of the reader these men may seem like the most heartless and depraved wretches, but in spite of their actions of that day and night the reverse is true. They were a lot of the biggest-hearted fellows one would find in a year's travel. No one in misfortune could have

appealed to them for help in vain. Bill Cole, the manager of this ranch, was one of those big-hearted fellows who, if he had but one crust, the man with none could share it with him as long as it lasted, and no questions asked about his pedigree or habits. A number of them were known to me and they were all of this type. They had taken this old man in and cared for him, not because they needed him, but because he needed them. They had done everything they could for him while he was alive, and when he was dead and beyond their power to aid, the funeral served as an outlet for their overflowing spirits. Neither would they use Reddy's superstitious fears to do him any real injury, for when he did not immediately return each man saddled a horse and all preparations were made for a search through the hills, when they heard the heavy footfalls that announced Reddy's race in. Reddy said he remembered nothing after his bolt from the ghost until he came to himself a mile or so from the ranch. Then when he realized where he was, frightened more than ever, he returned to the ranch with no less celerity than he had left it. These are the facts, as I got them from one who was there.

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## Jess Gandy's Reminiscences of Early Days in Custer County, Neb.

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In the fall of 1876, in company with Charles Penn, I left York, Nebraska, and came up into Custer county on a hunt. We arrived after dark at Mr. Murphy's place on Clear creek. On our approach the dogs began a violent barking, and suddenly the lights went out.

We thought rather strange at this, but proceeded to knock on the door several times before we received any response.

Finally a childish voice rang out on the night air with a determined and rather angry accent: "Who are you and what do you want?"

"We are hunters, and wish to stay all night."

"That's too thin. Leave or I will shoot through the door."

"Say, Sis, where is your pa?"

"That's no concern of yours. Leave or I'll shoot."

We thought discretion the better part of valor, and got out of range of the door, and finally convinced the two plucky little girls within, who were only about ten and fourteen years old, that we were friends. They had heard



the dogs bark and took us for Indians or horse thieves, and had turned out the light, got the gun and proceeded to "hold the fort." We learned that Mr. Murphy and his wife had not yet returned from a cedar canon near by, where they were loading cedar to take to Grand Island the following day.



JESS GANDY



MRS. JESS GANDY

There could be quite a romance written about this family. Mr. Murphy had a few cattle and the two children had to do the herding and have had to subsist for three weeks at a time on a small grass nut which they dug while herding their cattle. But to return to our story: Mr. Murphy and his wife came in presently and we were hospitably entertained and next morning directed to Mr. McEndeffer's place, Mr. Murphy's closest neighbor, on the Muddy, about ten miles in a southwesterly direction. We had only proceeded a short distance when we sighted a band of elk, and everything else was forgotten in the exciting chase which ensued. We found ourselves at night over twenty miles out of our course, and in the midst of a genuine Nebraska blizzard. We selected a sheltered place on the banks of the Muddy, where we could obtain fuel, and camped until morning. We lost sight of the elk the previous evening among the hills, not having been able to get a single shot at them under 700 yards.

In the morning it was still storming and we retraced our steps and arrived at McEndeffer's the following evening. We hunted with Mr. McEndeffer about a week, and had splendid success, having killed several deer. I

will say Charley Penn is the only man I ever saw who could shoot quicker than I can.

While on this trip we camped all night in an old deserted sod house and found a large heap of tumble weeds and tickle grass blown up into one corner of the room.

Being very tired, we did not stop to investigate what might be hidden under this immense stack of debris, but proceeded to spread our tarpaulins on it and make our bed.

After a little Charley was snoring away at the rate of about three knots an hour. I felt our bed move, but thought it must be my imagination. After a little the movements beneath became so violent there could be no mistake that there was something underneath our bed. I remembered when a boy of hearing that circumstances sometimes make strange bedfellows, and I thought we "had 'em sure." I nudged Charley quietly and whispered: "Charley, there's something under our bed." But I might just as well have talked to the sod walls. He kept right on sawing wood. The rolling and tumbling motion continued with still greater violence every minute, until we were beginning to get seasick. I got desperate, and, springing up in bed, fairly shouted in Charley's ear: "Charley, there's something alive under our bed," and Charley came back from dreamland with a snort and puff just as we began slowly sinking toward the ground and the heaving and surging motion ceased. Looking out towards the door we saw a long procession of little dark-looking objects with white stripes on their backs, filing out of the door, and we then realized that we had been sleeping on top of a family of skunks which had taken up their winter quarters in the place.

Once during the summer of 1881, while Jess still lived near West Union, he and his wife were out gathering wild fruit. Jess was a short distance from the wagon. He heard a shot, and rushing out, found his wife had shot a four-pronged buck. But he proved to be only stunned. What was to be done must be done quickly, as the buck was liable to jump up and get away at a second's notice. The suddenness of the thing rather rattled Jess. He had no more ammunition, and not even a jack knife to cut his throat. He was indeed in a dilemma. A dozen different plans flashed through his mind in a few seconds as to the best way to kill the buck, and he saw with alarm that he showed signs of coming to his right mind. He was so excited he forgot he could take off his neckyoke and dispatch him, but what he did do was about as funny as Judge Kilgore is said to have done in the winter of '80. The judge packed water two miles for several weeks through two feet of snow, till some one suggested that snow, when melted, made water. But we left Jess with the buck showing signs of returning life. All at once a bright idea

occurred to him, and quick as a flash he had acted on it, and had dumped Mr. Buck into the wagon and tied him with his halter ropes. Then, sitting astride his head and neck, yelled, "Let 'em go," and Mrs. Gandy did "let 'em go," for Jarvis Kimes' farm, a distance of half a mile east across the prairie. They had gone but a short distance when the buck came to his senses, and finding Jess astride of him, a struggle for life ensued between the two. It was just about an equal match, and for some time it was a matter of doubt which would come out on top. The buck had free use of his hind legs and when he brought them down on the sides of the wagon box it looked as if he would soon kick the wagon to pieces. The noise frightened the ponies and away they flew, up hill and down hill, over the rough ground, Mrs. Gandy holding them straight ahead and letting them go. The sharp feet of the deer tore Jess' clothing into ribbons and bruised his body fearfully. He had a veritable white elephant on his hands, and when the ponies dashed up to the door of Mr. Kimes he was about exhausted, and panting and gasping for breath, his face flushed and the perspiration rolling down his face in big drops. He was only too glad to get some assistance to dispatch the buck.

In September, 1881, Mr. Gandy was making hay with a neighbor, Mr. Lyle, three miles west of the river, coming home only on Saturday nights, Mrs. Gandy being left at home to look after the cattle. One Saturday evening a man came to the house and got his supper, telling Mrs. Gandy that he had eaten nothing for two days. He was a pitiful looking object. He had a blanket rolled up on his back and carried a pair of shoes in his hand, his feet being so swollen that he could not wear them. After he had eaten his supper he requested of Mrs. Gandy the privilege of staying all night. She told him that she was alone and that he would have to seek accommodation elsewhere. As he had come down the river in a boat, and there was a settlement at West Union, two miles further on, he started off and Mrs. Gandy got her pony and proceeded to round up her cattle. She returned, attended to her milking and other duties, and went to the house, it being by this time quite dark. When she entered the house what was her consternation to discover the stranger sitting upright in bed, with two huge revolvers lying by his side and a number of papers scattered about him. When she came in he remarked to her that he was making himself at home. She replied: "I should think you are," and left the room. As it was Saturday night, she knew that Jess would be home about 11 o'clock, so she took her horse and started for Mr. Lyle's, meeting her husband on the way. When they returned to the house they found the man still sitting up in the bed, groaning with the pain in his swollen limbs. He begged to be allowed to remain so piteously that they had not the heart to turn him out, and he was allowed to remain until morn-

ing, although they suspected that he was a criminal. The supposition proved to be correct, as it was afterwards learned that he had robbed a postoffice at Stem's ranch.

A funny incident is related of the experience of Jess in trying to ride a buffalo. He had made his boast that he was going to ride the first buffalo he saw. Shortly after that, while out hunting one day, he came across four or five of the beasts. He fired at short range and shot an old bull through the lungs, which dropped down on his haunches and dropped its head, the blood coming out of its nostrils. Jess thought this would be an excellent opportunity to mount and to make good his boast. He succeeded in getting on the back of the dying buffalo, but soon found that he had mounted a very lively corpse, as the old fellow came to his feet with a bound and started off at a rapid pace. Dave Hickman, who was an eye witness of the performance, declares that at the second jump of the scared buffalo Jess was thrown about fifteen feet into the air. He came down on his feet and lost no time in making for a tree about a hundred yards distant, into which he climbed, while the buffalo was flying in the opposite direction.

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## Hunting Buffalo on the Great Plains.

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A. S. Burgher.

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I have just been reading a communication from Dr. Carver. I knew Carver quite well and was at his place in 1873-4-5. I was a buffalo hunter and trapper. Carver hunted altogether on horseback, but the regular buffalo hunters, or hide hunters, as they were sometimes called, killed their game by what we called the still hunt—that is, on foot. I always aimed to get within three or four hundred yards of the herds, and by firing a few times with my long range Sharp's rifle, break the backs of two or three of the old cows that were leaders. As they crawled around on their front feet the other buffalos would gather about them in alarm and curiosity, which enabled us to approach a little closer, getting what the hunters called a "stand." I have frequently killed as many as forty buffalo at one stand, usually firing about three shots for each hide. This was considered good work. Sometimes we had to take to our heels, as many wounded buffalo would be on all sides, and they were very dangerous. We called them "spike bulls." We always





Passing Away.

aimed to kill all the bulls, as their hides were worth a dollar more than those of the cows, the average value of a bull hide in 1875 being \$2.15. Forty bull hides made a good load. It cost us seven cents for ammunition every shot we fired, and when I say that I kept an account until I had used \$2,200 worth of ammunition in killing 5,000 buffalo and other game, my readers may be incredulous. J. N. Dubois, a prominent hide buyer of Kansas City, told me at Buffalo, on the Kansas Pacific railroad, in 1874, that during ten months of that year 18,000 hides per day were marketed, with 500 outfits in the field, making thirty-six buffalo killed per day by each outfit. Carver is right. Had we foreseen how rapidly the buffalo would be exterminated and how valuable their hides would soon become, we might have made our fortunes. The carcasses that were left rotting on the plains by the millions might also have been utilized. There were a few meat-drying concerns, but they did not appear to be a success.

All kinds of men were in the buffalo hunting business, some for profit and others for sport. Wash Reasoner, a Kansas senator, was quite a sport in that line, while preachers, lawyers, roughs and toughs all met on a com-

mon level to slaughter these noble animals. I have seen General Phil Sheridan forsake the company of aristocratic military attaches to share a meal of buffalo tongue and brains with Miller and Lamb's hunting outfit. Peak and Campbell were the largest outfit on the plains, working from thirty-five to forty men.

"The Slaughter Pen," taking its name from the great number of buffalo killed in that vicinity, on the Arkansas river, was the center of the range. There were comparatively few hides sold along the line of the Union Pacific railway, although vast herds existed in the Platte valley long after the building of that road. The Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, accompanied by a party of American officers and others, spent a short time south of the Platte river, a part of the time engaged in buffalo hunting. About the same time Dr. Carver, Buffalo Bill and assistants were trying to catch live buffalo to be shipped to a man at Niagara Falls. They finally succeeded in getting one old bull across the Platte river, after which they gave up the job.

One would hardly believe at this day that no longer ago than 1874 there were countless thousands of buffalo roaming over the valley of the Republican river. Their tramp shook the earth like the tread of a vast army, and in crossing the river they made a continuous roar mingled with a low rumbling "m-o-o," that sounded like an approaching storm of the early Nebraska type.

The professional buffalo hunter was a peculiar being, and had some characteristics that distinguished him from all the rest of the world. When talking to you he would invariably be scratching his leg with one hand and rubbing his side with the other elbow, as if by perpetual motion he could keep quiet what he called "buffalo mange," or, in other words, "line backs." During this operation he would be telling you how, that morning, he had run onto a herd of buffalo, killed forty of them, slipped up to an old bull and cut his hamstrings, etc.

There were certain established rules governing buffalo hunting which were lived up to by common consent, and were never violated by a regular buffalo hunter. For instance, if an outfit was camped upon the head of some stream, another outfit would never camp above it, even if it had to procure water by digging in the ground, for in so doing it would interfere with the buffalo coming into the water. When camped along a stream the outfits always took care to be at least a mile apart.

When the buffalo came north of the Kansas Pacific railroad it would be some time before the hunters would follow. Everything would be quiet along the Republican, the Sapa, Red Willow, Chief creek and other streams, and the intermediate country would soon be black with the immense herds. Some still morning the decisive report of a Sharp's or a Remington would be heard,



Powell Canon.

and by noon there would be a continuous fusillade up and down the various streams. By night the adjoining hills would be dotted with hundreds of buffalo carcasses glistening in the setting sun, robbed of their hides by the army of western civilizers. Each outfit had its hunter for each day. He mounted his horse in the morning and started out, the balance of the camp waiting until they heard him firing, then with a wagon the skimmers followed the sound of the gun. They became so expert in recognizing the reports of the rifles of the different hunters that they always knew just where their particular hunter was working. When the hides had been hauled into the camp they were stacked up and the outfit put in their time loading shells for the next day's hunt.

At one time a party of Utes came near our camp on a hunting trip and some of the young bucks tried to stampede our horses, of which we had six. Failing to scare them otherwise, they began firing arrows at them. We did not propose to put up with this impudence, so we got out and prepared to



defend ourselves. One of our party, being a little hasty, was on the point of firing on the Utes, when George Washington, an old chief, rode up and ordered them away, thus averting what might have been serious trouble. Near the same time Sitting Bull, who had secured a permit from the government, came down to hunt, accompanied by about a hundred young Sioux. South of Julesburg the young Indians came across a hunter's camp with only one man in it. They pounded him with their bows until he thought he would be killed and then proceeded to cut his furs into pieces. The hunter backed into his dugout and got his "big fifty" and was about to string a dozen or so of his tormentors on a bullet, when up comes Sitting Bull. He went after the bucks with his bow, cracking their heads right and left, and killing two of them with his revolver. He subsequently made the young men kill and bring to the hunter the same number of hides they had destroyed, besides giving him two horses.

The name of the hunter referred to above was McGuire. He was afterwards murdered on the Frenchman creek, fifty miles southeast of Julesburg, by a man named Dodge, who had followed him from Arkansas. Dodge was arrested and tried and found guilty. His attorneys made a motion for a new trial and Dodge was kept in the jail at Nebraska City. It is said that while Dodge was in jail there that a brother of McGuire secured a position as watchman at the jail, where he killed Dodge one night, claiming that the prisoner was trying to escape. There were comparatively few cases of this kind on the range, and none by regular buffalo hunters.

Sometimes hide thieves followed us and took skins that had been piled up while the hunters were following the herd. These fellows frequently met with disaster by the unexpected return of the owners of the hides. Nearly all of the carousing done around gambling holes on the frontier and laid to buffalo hunters was done by sharks and thieves who followed in the wake of the regular and orderly buffalo hunter.

The Indians made considerable trouble for some of the buffalo hunters, although our outfit fared very well in that respect. Upon one occasion my two brothers and myself were trapping on Indian creek, when a party of seventy-five Sioux passed through and struck our camp. They made me cook dinner for them, and while I was at work a number of them danced around me with their arrows drawn tightly and pointed toward me in a manner that made me exceedingly nervous. They ate everything in sight, and you may believe we felt thankful that they let us off even thus easy. An Indian by the name of Big Blue used to come up on the head of the Republican river to hunt, and in 1872 three intermediate Sioux chiefs came to his camp. A trapper known as Nebraska Wild Bill, and his partner, killed the three Sioux,





Indian Camp.

Whistler, chief of the cut-off band of the Ogalallas, Fat Badger and Stinking Hand. This outrage was committed in the fall. The winter following my brothers and myself trapped on the Stinking Water, and the Whistler band was near us all winter, but they never molested us. They knew who killed the chiefs, and Nebraska Wild Bill never dared come up on the Republican after that.

Hank Clifford, a trader, John R. King, myself and brothers, were about the first settlers of what is now Red Willow county. King was an old soldier of the regular army, and a better shot with a needle gun would be hard to find. He professed great friendship for the Sioux, but they attacked him on Pumpkin creek upon one occasion and got the worst of it. He afterwards told me he had killed thirteen of them, and I do not doubt it. They crippled him for life, and his finger nails were worn off until they bled, digging into a bank for protection. After he had the Indians routed he went sixteen miles on one leg, with his gun for a crutch. The Indians captured his furs, team and camping outfit. King afterwards received pay from the government for the loss of his property.

In 1867 Lieutenant Williams and a party of sixteen government surveyors were missing. In 1869 I was engaged in mowing hay four miles from Indianola, on the south side of the Republican river. I ran into what proved to be an eight-inch tracing compass. It was buried in the sod with one sight sticking out. I also found there a heavy rifle with "Lieutenant Williams" engraved on the brass side plate. Many a trapping and hunting outfit, to my certain knowledge, came up missing in that part of the country about that time. Two men trapping on Big Timber creek were run out by the Sioux. They got away, but that was all, and the Indians got everything they had, including three baking powder cans full of arsenic. The men said they hoped the red devils would think it was baking powder and make some bread with it. Perhaps they did, but they likely tried it on a dog first.

Three men, Carrothers, Doan and Rogers, were making quite a good thing about this time in the business of catching wild horses on the range south of Julesburg. When they found a herd they would follow it slowly and turn in some tame horses with bells on. In eight or ten days the whole herd would be so tame they could be easily corraled. Ned Buntline gives a description of the trained horses that perform in the Wild West shows and the marvelous performances of some of their riders, but some of the every-day exploits of common hunters on the plains in these early days far eclipsed anything that a Wild West show ever exhibited. We could not all be Codys, Wild Bills, Bloody Dicks, or Scar Faced Charleys, but some men who made no pretensions to great skill and who did not court notoriety did things that would sound well in a dime novel. In 1869 the soldiers had captured a band of Sioux and were bringing them down the south side of the North Platte river. Another band of Sioux were following them up on the opposite side of the river, evidently watching for an opportunity to get some advantage of the troops or to aid any of the prisoners who might try to escape. When near Ash Bottom, and simultaneously with the arrival of the wild horse outfit referred to above, one of the Indians in charge of the soldiers jumped into the river and struck out for the north side, swimming and diving like a muskrat. The soldiers fired repeatedly at him, as his head appeared above the water, but missed him every time. He had almost reached the other shore when Rogers, the wild horse man, rode up, and, firing from the ground, shot the redskin through the head. The balance of the prisoners witnessed this exhibition of skill on the part of a man who made no pretensions of skill with a gun, and from that time on Rogers was a marked man, and suffered the loss of horses and camping outfits a number of times at the hands of the Indians. He had to quit hunting, and learned that fair play, even with Indians, is good policy.

In 1878 the Utes were camped thirty-five miles south of the Platte river and eighty miles from Greeley, Colorado. A hunting party of Sioux, headed by Sitting Bull, was camped at Julesburg, where they had seven or eight hundred lodges. I had a camp near the Utes. They made great preparations for war, but that was all there was of it. They were afraid, and the Sioux daresn't. However, a party under Ute Charley and Ouray, the council chief, made a raid on the ponies of the Sioux at Julesburg. They had two horses apiece, and the boys who were to do the stampeding were securely tied to their ponies. It is said the Utes waded from island to island in descending the Platte river. They succeeded in running off about a thousand ponies, besides getting away with 400 of the best horses of the Sioux. I was at Kempton and Brush's ranch, thirty-five miles from Julesburg, when the Sioux came up, following the Utes. They went no further than the top of a big bluff, four miles from the ranch. A few miles in advance of where they stood we could see the cloud of dust that indicated the position of the party with the stolen ponies. There were several hundred of the Sioux in full war paint, and also a number of squaws, who had probably been brought along to cook, for they certainly did some around the ranch that night and the following day, as squad after squad came in from the front to report to superiors. As far as I could see they were making a great show and accomplishing little. Twenty-five white hunters could have made those Utes drop the horses in a hurry, but these several hundred cowardly Sioux did not dare to attack an enemy which they outnumbered ten to one. The Sioux ate up and took everything about the ranch. Among other delicacies, they cooked a number of skunks that had been poisoned for wolf bait, which my outfit had scattered up and down the river. We never learned whether the poisoned meat did any damage to the Sioux. It is hard to kill an Indian.

Twenty-five miles south of the Platte is a high elevation called Cap Rock. In 1874 there were numbers of Indian skulls and bones scattered about the vicinity, the result of a massacre of Sioux by the Pawnees. The Sioux were exhausted from a rapid retreat from Carr's troops. The Pawnees took advantage of this and we have it from good authority that they killed 200 of their enemies. This massacre occurred in 1866. In 1874 the Pawnees were permitted by the government to go upon the Republican to hunt. When returning, and near where the town of Culbertson now stands, they saw a large herd of buffalo approaching their camp, which was secreted in a sort of canon. All the bucks that were able to do service were soon out after the big game, which led them a merry chase, while a band of Sioux, who had planned this trap which their hereditary enemies had so easily fallen into, rushed down into the camp of the Pawnees, where a sickening slaughter of

old men, squaws and papposes took place, the number butchered being in all 184. Swift intelligence of the presence of the Sioux in their defenseless camp soon reached the hunters, but instead of rushing to the defense of their squaws and papposes, they flew the other way as fast as their ponies could carry them, while the Sioux retreated with equal haste in the opposite direction. Three days later I visited the ground. In the meantime a heavy rain had washed the bodies of the Pawnee women and children into a winrow at the bottom of the gulch, a horrible example of Indian revenge and cruelty. The Sioux had waited since the massacre of 1866 to wreak vengeance on their enemies, and when they had accomplished the ghastly work they boasted of their prowess. The Pawnees were never seen in that region again, although in former days that was one of their favorite resorts. Our camp was but a few miles from the scene of the massacre, and we heard the firing, but paid little heed to it as something that did not concern us. Pawnee Killer (a Sioux) afterwards told me the Sioux drove the herd of buffalo down in order to draw the Pawnee men away from their camp.

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## Held Up by Jack Nolan.

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On Saturday night last a prisoner named Nolan, confined in the jail at Plum Creek on the charge of murder, made his escape. He was supposed to be a member of the Milton gang, and was handcuffed and shackled in his cell, but on Sunday morning he had flown. The shackles had been sawed off, as were also the bars of the window. Some parties were in town on Saturday evening who were suspected of being members of the Milton gang, and as they were also gone on Sunday morning, it is supposed that they sawed off the bars from the cell and assisted Nolan in getting away.—Kearney Press, April 14, 1879.

On the Sunday morning referred to in the above clipping from a Kearney newspaper, a man might have been seen on foot slowly approaching the bluffs which border the Platte valley to the north of Plum Creek. The sun was just rising over the miniature mountains, casting long shadows over the beautiful plain and tinting the myriads of dewdrops with the colors of the rainbow as they sparkled like sapphires and topazes on every blade of grass. It was a scene which might have entranced poet or painter, but the solitary individual whom we have mentioned appears to be insensible to the beauties of nature which surround him. He strains his eyes in the early morning light



as he scans the horizon behind as if fearful of discovering some pursuer on his trail. Shortly he comes unexpectedly upon a little sod house nestled among the hills, from the chimney of which a thin column



JOHN FINCH.



RALPH DAHL,  
A prosperous young farmer, near Westervell.

of smoke ascends into the calm morning air, indicating that even at this early hour the inmates are astir. At the same time honest John Downey and his wife discover a stranger approaching their abode and wonder who it can be so early in the morning, and afoot, a means of travel quite rare in days when broncos were so plentiful. The stranger advances to the door, makes a polite bow and inquires: "Can you give me some breakfast and show me the way to Olive's ranch?"

"Yes, sir, I think we can, if you can put up with the kind of grub poor folks has to live on," replied John, "and by keepin' that road yonder, which is called the Plum Creek road, you'll come to the South Loup river about fifty miles north of here. Folks in this country don't travel much afoot," added John.

"No, sir, I suppose not; nor was I expecting to make the trip on foot. I expected to come with some friends who were to meet me at Plum Creek. They will probably overtake me before I get there."

The scant meal finished, the stranger asked to rest awhile before pursuing his journey.

"All right," replied Mr. Downey, "but ye'll have to excuse me, as I have to work."

While the stranger had been eating his keen eye had taken an inventory of the furniture of the house, which consisted of but a single room. The objects which most interested him were a long needle gun and a belt containing a quantity of loaded shells, which hung upon the wall. John had been gone but a short time when the stranger stepped across the room, coolly took down the belt, buckled it around his waist, picked up the gun and walked out of the house, Mrs. Downey looking on in open-mouthed astonishment at the impudence of the fellow.

"What are ye doin', sir? Drop that gun or I'll call my husband, who's not far off."

"Very well, madam; call him as quick as you please; but I need this gun in my business and I intend to take it along. Good morning."

No sooner had he started for the main road than Mrs. Downey rushed out and gave the alarm to her husband, who was at work a short distance away. Securing a handy pitchfork, he went after the bold thief and demanded the return of his property. But the stranger stood him off and advised him to go back about his business, which would save him from having any trouble, and perhaps from having his head blown off. With this grim hint he resumed his journey.

Two days later a man could have been seen standing upon a high point of land near the Plum Creek road, about thirty-five miles north of that town, leaning on a long gun and gazing intently to the northwest.

"Well, this is bucking the tiger with a vengeance, and I am going to lose, unless my luck changes soon. I haven't tasted water nor food for two days and I can't hold out much longer. If I could run across Milton or some of his boys, I could snap my fingers at Dick James and his hellhounds of the law."

Had we looked closely we would have recognized the stranger who had breakfasted with the Downeys some two days previously. He had a rather refined appearance, was fashionably dressed in a dark suit, with Prince Albert coat, altogether unlike the popular conception of outlaw, and horse-thief of the wild plains of the West. He was about thirty-five years of age, of rather stout build, dark complexioned, and possessed a pair of glittering black eyes through which the devil that was in him could be discovered at a glance.

The reader will have guessed by this time that this man is none other than Jack Nolan, the notorious outlaw and gambler, who had recently shot and killed a Mexican at Sidney, and who had broken out of the jail at Plum

Creek as recounted above. While the news item at the head of this article would seem to indicate that Milton or some of his men had been implicated in the jail delivery, such was not the case. Had Milton been the agent through whom Nolan had been liberated the fugitive would have been provided with a horse on which to get away, and not have been compelled to adopt the slow and unprofessional method of "hoofing it"—and unarmed at that.

Continuing his soliloquy: "Jim said that Milton was up in Powell canon, wherever that is. But there is the Plum Creek road; I'll drop down to that, rest awhile and try to think up some scheme to get a horse."

He descended, almost sliding, to the base of the steep bluff, and threw himself down on the short grass by the side of the road, keeping a sharp look-out up and down, however, to prevent anyone from approaching him unawares. But tired nature soon asserted herself, in spite of his fears, and in a short time the fugitive fell into a heavy slumber, where we will leave him while we proceed to Olive's ranch, in Custer county, on the bank of the South Loup river.

The ranch building is of cedar logs, and consisted of two parts, with a door and a small window in each. The roof is of split logs and poles overlaid with several thicknesses of sod. It stands upon a gentle incline about twenty yards east of the river, which flows past in a southerly direction, almost hidden from view by a thick growth of timber which lines the bank on both sides. Corrals for cattle and horses are located in close proximity to the ranch house, and in the gray light of the early morning a few sleepy cowboys are moving about preparing for the duties of the day.

"Come, hurry up, Kid; breakfast is almost ready, and if you're going to Plum Creek to-day you've got to get a move on you," exclaimed John Gatlin, the foreman, as he poked a drowsy lad in the ribs. The boy turned over in his bunk, rubbed his eyes lazily and wished the head push was in Jericho or some other seaport. However, he was soon up and storing away plate after plate of hot cakes and molasses while the cook wondered where on earth the boy was putting all the "chuck." The meal over, the lad is soon in the saddle headed for Plum Creek, driving four saddle horses ahead of him necked together in pairs. The attention of the reader is directed to one of these animals. He is a large, clean-limbed bay horse, with light-colored flanks, the private saddle horse of I. P. Olive, and famous all over the range as "Old White Flank." He is richly caparisoned with saddle and bridle of exquisite workmanship, made to order for the noted cattle king. The lad is John Finch (at this writing a popular and prominent business man of Arnold, in this county,) and he is on his way to Plum Creek with some horses that

have been ridden by some men from that city to the ranch. The rim of the morning sun is just beginning to appear over the low hills that skirt the valley of the Loup as John hears the voice of Gatlin shouting after him: "Be on the lookout, boy, or you are likely to be held up by horse thieves."

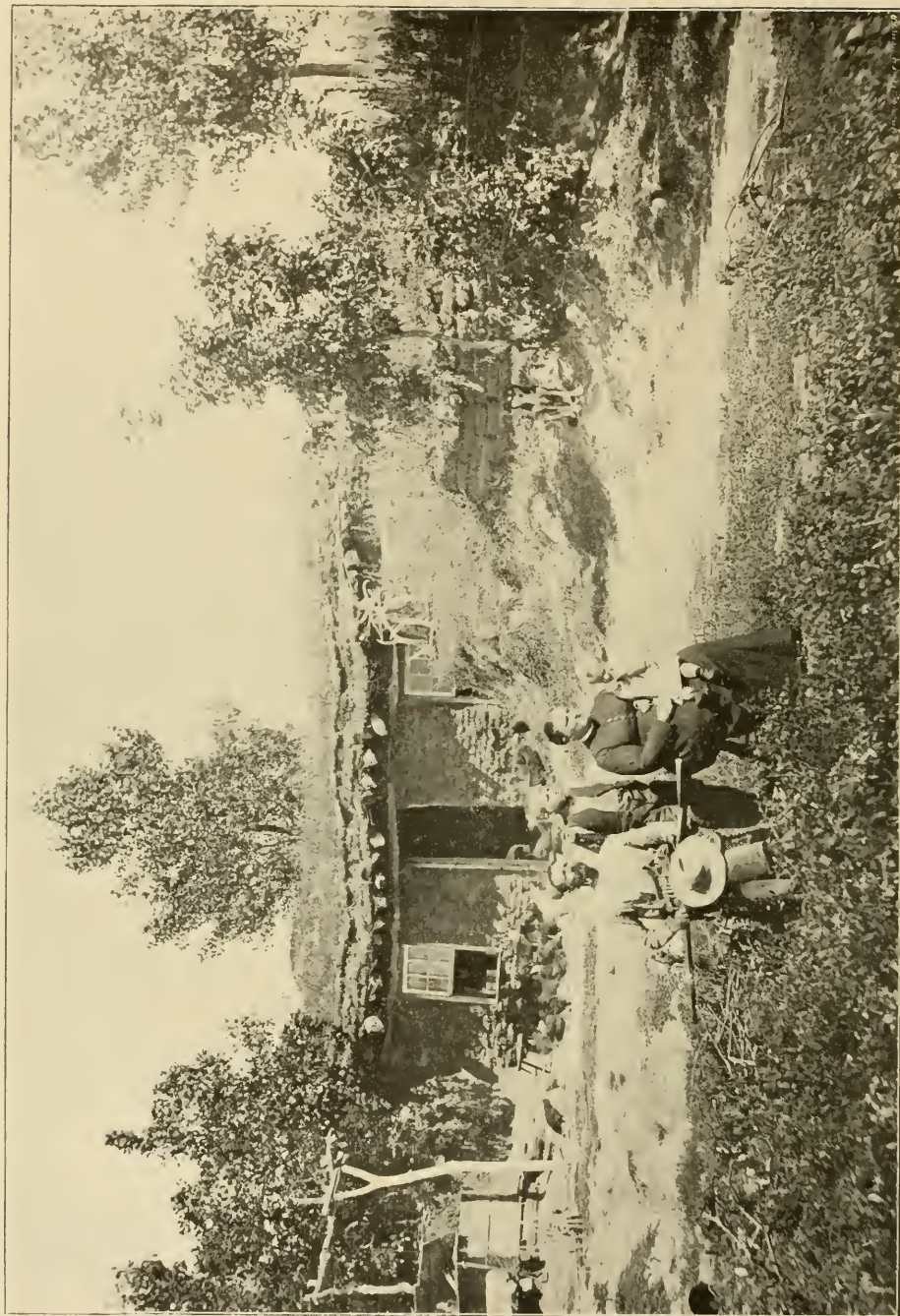
"All right," shouted back the boy, and with a whoop he urged the horses through the river at the old ford and was soon out of sight and hearing.

"I don't feel just right about letting that boy go alone, but Wheat can't be spared, and there's no one else to send. I hope nothing'll happen to the kid."

The boy had proceeded on his way some fifteen miles without incident, and is jogging leisurely along with nothing to be seen on any side except an endless expanse of undulating prairie covered with short buffalo grass, without a tree or even a shrub to break the monotony of the landscape. Far behind him, rising up like an impassable barrier, the hazy blue bluffs that hem the valley of the South Loup shimmer in the warm sunshine, while far ahead he can discern the divide from which he will descend into the broad valley of the Platte. Eternal silence reigns over this vast solitude, except for the occasional twitter of some little bird and the tramp of the horses' feet as they patter along the dusty trail. The boy has not seen a habitation nor a human being since leaving the ranch, nor does he expect to see either until he catches the first glimpse of the city towards which he is traveling. It might be supposed that the parting admonition of the boss would cause the lad to pursue his journey with some degree of nervousness, but John Finch knew not what fear was. Consequently when he discovered a dark object lying on the prairie a little ahead of him he did not retreat, but advanced near enough to make out that it was a man—dead, he supposed. The tramp of the horses awakened the sleeper, who sprang wildly to his feet and looked excitedly around, prepared to retreat into the draw behind him if necessary. Taking in the situation at a glance, he motioned the boy to come on, but young Finch, realizing his danger, sank his spurs into his horse, lashed the ones he was driving and tried to get away. But Jack Nolan was not the man to let an opportunity like that slip by unimproved. He leveled his gun at the boy and shouted: "Halt!" John knew enough about wild west life to make him understand that halting was the proper thing to do under the circumstances, and he halted. Nolan ordered him to round up the horses, which John at first declined to do, but finally complied at the solicitation of the needle gun.

"This is the horse I want," and vaulting into Olive's finely chased and decorated saddle, Nolan detached "Old White Flank" from his fellow and





Jacob Cover on the Muddy, 1886.

rode off. At a short distance he shouted back to the boy: "Young man, if you see Dick James, just tell him to come and get me if he wants me."

Finch wasted no time in completing his journey, and as he rode into a livery barn at Plum Creek driving three horses ahead of him he was met by Jack Woods, an employe of Olive, who inquired:

"Where is 'Old White Flank'?"

"Jack Nolan has got him."

"What in h— is Jack Nolan doing with him?"

"Well, he wanted him, and as he had a bead on me with a long needle gun, I had to let him have him."

"Why in the devil didn't you follow him and see where he went?"

This nettled the boy, and he retorted hotly: "Say, Jack, if you want to find Jack Nolan, get me a fresh horse and I'll put you onto his trail."

The result of this confab was that after a hasty meal the daring lad, on a fast horse, was galloping over the Plum Creek road like a whirlwind, Jack Woods at his side.

This man Woods was a regular dare-devil—small, wiry, active as a cat, about thirty years of age, and afraid of nothing. He subsequently became sheriff of Kearney county and was killed by Zimmerman and Belmont, two desperadoes, who he was trying to arrest at Minden. The two men were eating their dinner at a certain hotel and Jack attempted to capture them by going in at one door of the dining room while his deputy was to enter at the other. At the last moment the nerve of the deputy failed him and Woods was killed. The murderers were pursued. Belmont was shot and killed in the chase, Zimmerman was captured, tried and sentenced to be hanged, but was subsequently released on some legal technicality.

But we are digressing. Woods and Finch headed for the Durfee ranch, near the mouth of the Cottonwood, in Custer county, about three miles from the present site of Callaway, supposing that Nolan would go there to stay that night. They arrived at the ranch about 2 o'clock in the morning. Woods held the horses while Finch called out Jim Gray and inquired if he had any strangers stopping with him. Receiving a negative reply, they proceeded to the Olive ranch, a few miles down the South Loup river, where they saw a dim light shining through one of the small windows. Finch was stationed at this window, while Woods, with his finger on the trigger of his gun, opened the door, fully intending to kill Nolan if he found him inside. But Nolan was not there. John Gatlin and John Wheat, the only men at the ranch, informed Woods that during the afternoon of the day before, while they were out, some one had come into the house, ate up their dinner, exchanged a long needle gun for a short one of the same make, a Prince Albert coat for a short riding

coat, stolen a pair of fine blankets, and vamoosed. By the time they had learned this much about the movements of the man they were hunting it was almost 4 o'clock in the morning, and having eaten a lunch and warmed their chilled limbs at a blazing fire of cedar wood, the tired boy, who had ridden over a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, was soon fast asleep, and did not awaken until 8 o'clock, when he found that Woods, Gatlin and Wheat were gone. Leaving John to look after the ranch, we will follow the three men in their chase after Nolan.



J. E. Babbit's Irrigation Dam in South Loup River  
on his Ranch

They followed his trail north as far as Spring Creek, where they came upon the outlaw just as he was striking camp and preparing to mount "Old White Flank." As soon as Nolan observed the boys he coolly threw down his picket rope, knelt on one knee and waited for them to approach. When about seventy-five yards from him he motioned for them to stop, shouting:

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"We want that horse," replied Woods.

"You can't have him," with an oath.

"By —, we will have him," says Woods, preparing to jump from his horse.

Gatlin grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him back into the saddle, saying: "You fool, he will kill you before you touch the ground."

"Boys," said Nolan, "my life and liberty depend upon this horse, and I will die before I give him up. One of you may come up and talk with me, but the other two must stay back."



They held a short consultation and Gatlin went forward to talk with Nolan, while Woods and Wheat rode back a short distance.

"That horse you have there is I. P. Olive's saddle horse, and that saddle and bridle were made for him to order. Olive is now being tried for his life and it isn't likely that he will ever use them again himself, but they will be relics that his family would not like to lose. Let me have them, and you may have mine, which will serve your purpose just as well."

"Not by a d— sight; this horse just suits me and the saddle fits me, and you can't have either."

Gatlin pleaded in vain and finally proposed that they go to Van Sickles' ranch, on the Middle Loup, above the mouth of the Dismal, where he thought he could procure Nolan just as good an outfit. He was so persistent that Nolan finally agreed to these terms, and promised to surrender "White Flank" just as soon as Gatlin got him another horse as good. Gatlin rode back to his companions and reported the arrangement, instructing them to make a show of returning home, but to follow at a distance so as not to be observed by Nolan, to Van Sickle's ranch, where he thought Nolan could be captured.

The reader, who is unacquainted with the West as it was at this time, and who is a stranger to the habits, customs and accomplishments of the cowboys and outlaws who infested the region, might suppose that it would be an easy matter for these three men to capture or kill the single individual of whom they were in pursuit. But it is not a question of main strength. Like all frontiersmen they were adepts in the use of firearms. The Winchester and the six-shooter were their inseparable companions, and were handled with a dexterity and rapidity that meant death at every move. Had either Woods or his partners made the slightest motion that suggested a resort to their weapons, that move would have been anticipated by the ever-alert Nolan, who would have had the "drop" on his enemy quick as a flash of lightning.

Gatlin rejoined Nolan, and the latter, suspecting that all was not right, said: "See here, Gatlin; don't you put up any job on me or you'll be sorry for it."

Gatlin explained that everything was on the square; that he had gone back to tell his companions of the arrangement that had been made, and that they were returning to the Olive ranch.

The two men then set out for Van Sickle's, fifty miles away, a ride which would stagger the most experienced horseman of a later period, but which in those days of magnificent distances was considered a mere trifle. They had proceeded northwest about twenty miles when they entered the Muddy valley. Nolan proposed that they turn out their horses to graze and rest awhile.



Gatlin knew that Woods and Wheat were following a few miles in the rear, through the hills, and that they were likely to ride right into the valley and be discovered by the watchful Nolan. It was therefore the policy of Gatlin to keep on the move to prevent any such catastrophe. He tried to dissuade his companion from losing any time, as they had a long jaunt ahead of them and the day was wearing away.

"No," replied the outlaw, "I am going to let White Flank have some grass. I may have to ride for my life yet, and must take good care of him."

Gatlin was afraid to insist further, for fear of arousing Nolan's suspicions, so he turned his horse out with White Flank and lay down in the grass, keeping his eye on the trail behind them, expecting every moment to see Woods and Wheat make their appearance, and praying that they would be delayed. Minutes seemed hours to him, but he breathes easier as Nolan prepares to mount and resume the journey.

Just as they start Gatlin gives a furtive glance behind and discerns two dark objects emerging from the hills. He keeps close alongside of his companion, chattering glibly to prevent Nolan from looking around. Dropping a little behind he turns his head back and discerns that the two men have entered the valley and are now in full view. They have discovered that they have been too hasty and have come to a standstill, being too far in the valley to retreat. There is not a tree nor a shrub near them behind which they might hide. It is a moment of awful suspense to Gatlin, for should Nolan chance to turn around and catch a glimpse of the men in the rear, and learn that Gatlin had been playing false with him, the consequences might be serious. But he trusts to luck that before this happens they will pass around a projecting spur of a low bluff a hundred yards ahead which will shut off the view to the rear. There is said to be a subtle influence of mind upon mind, a sort of wireless telegraphy from brain to brain, by the mysterious power of which a thought that is uppermost in one person's head is transmitted to that of another near or distant. It may have been this unseen psychic force which prompted Nolan to do the very thing which Gatlin was praying he would not do. At any rate, Nolan turned his head just as they were rounding the promontory and his eagle eye detected the two horsemen silhouetted against the horizon. Turning to Gatlin he said fiercely:

"Those two devils you had with you are following us."

"That can't be," replied Gatlin, putting a bold face on the matter; "they went back to the ranch; let us hurry on and get to the end of our journey."

Nolan was not fully assured of the honesty of his traveling mate. He rode moodily along for some time without uttering a word, and then, suddenly reining up his horse, he said:

"See here, Gatlin; you can't put up any job on me; these fellows are following us and you know it."

"I don't know anything of the kind, and I care less; the best thing we can do is to keep on out of their way."

"Not by a d— sight; you can't play me for a sucker. Now you go your way and I'll go mine."



View of the D. O. Luce Cedar Canon, near New Helena, in Custer County, Neb.

Gatlin could do nothing but acquiesce, for he knew that further expostulation would be fruitless. He did not dare to rejoin Woods and Wheat as long as Nolan was in sight, so he switched off and went over to Victoria creek to stay all night with George Carr. As he was riding through the hills south of the creek he saw a man driving a small team of mules directly across his path, evidently attempting to head him off. The man was standing up in his buggy and had a Winchester in his hand. It being almost dark by this time, Gatlin did not recognize the man until he came quite close to him, and then found himself face to face with Dick James, sheriff of Dawson county, who had been following Gatlin for some time, mistaking him for Nolan, of whom he was in pursuit.

The two being old friends, proceeded to Carr's together and passed the night there. The next morning they sent a man over to Isaac Merchant's to find out if Jack Nolan was there. The messenger returned with the information that he was. How to capture the outlaw was the next question.

"Gatlin, are you acquainted with the lay of Merchant's buildings and the country around there? Is there any way we can get to the house without being seen by anybody inside or about the yard?"

"Yes," replied Gatlin; "by making a circuit we can get right up to the house without being seen."

They succeeded in accomplishing this, but discovered at the same time that Nolan was off on the prairie about three-quarters of a mile holding the lariat of Old White Flank, who was munching the buffalo grass with great relish. It is needless to say that James did not get his hands on the slippery outlaw that day.

Woods and Wheat had seen the separation of Gatlin and Nolan and had expected to be rejoined by the former; but as he failed to put in an appearance they proceeded on to Van Sickle's, as had been agreed upon. They stayed there all night, rode down the Middle Loup as far as the Smith and Tee ranch, of which Robert Farley was foreman, where they remained over the following night. The next morning they set out for the Finch-Hatton ranch. Shortly after their departure Nolan rode up to the Smith and Tee ranch, and learned that the boys were on his trail. He remained there all day. About sundown Mr. Farley saw Woods and Wheat returning, and knowing that Nolan was a desperate man and a dead shot and that Woods and Wheat would surely be killed if they attempted to capture him, thought it best to tell Nolan, so that he could get out of the way. But Nolan did not appear anxious to go. He simply stepped out of the house, rested his rifle on top of a post, took deliberate aim at the approaching cowboys, who were now within easy range, riding leisurely along, unsuspecting any danger. Farley expected every second to hear the report of Nolan's rifle and to see one of the boys drop, but he was spared that experience. Jack Nolan was a murderer and an outlaw, and a price was set upon his head; he was a fugitive from avenging justice, but with all his depravity there was a little spark of manhood yet alive within his breast which revolted at the idea of taking the life of a fellow-being without giving him a chance to defend himself. Acting upon this impulse of his better nature, he walked out into the open and met the two horsemen with presented gun. They were completely taken by surprise. Woods was a brave man, but Nolan had the drop on him and he knew that he would shoot to kill upon the least provocation. He retreated as gracefully as he could under the circumstances and put out for the hills.

Nolan motioned for Wheat to advance. "You curs have been following me, have you?"

"Yes," replied Wheat, timidly.

"Well, you have found me; what are you going to do about it?"



Sheep Industry Lee's Park, 1887.

"Seein' as you've got the drop on me, I guess I'll have to leave that to you."

"Then go and hunt up that other fellow and get out of this country as fast as your horses will carry you, and thank your stars that I didn't kill both of you when I had a good chance."

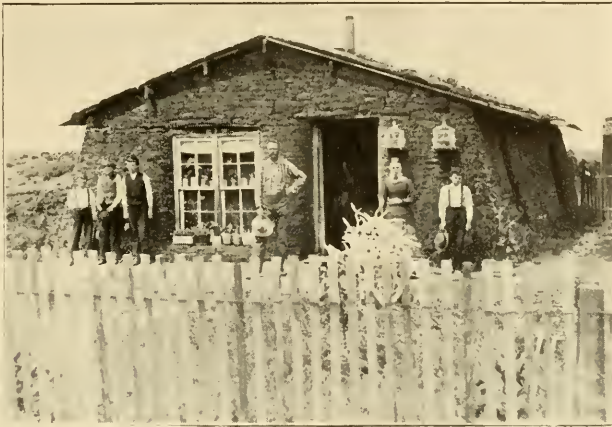
Wheat did not wait for a second invitation, and while he is hunting for his companion among the hills south of Victoria creek we will return to the Smith and Tee ranch and follow the fortunes of Jack Nolan, the outlaw.

Supper had been eaten, and night, with her sable mantle, had enveloped the valley of the Middle Loup in darkness, when the fierce barking of the dogs startled the inmates of the ranch house. Nolan rushed out, Winchester



in hand, to investigate the cause of the disturbance. The night was still and calm, and as the hunted man listened intently he heard a great splashing in the river near by, intermingled with curses and angry exclamations, indicating that the stream was being forded by a body of men on horseback. Thinking that the Victoria militia were after him, he rushed to the corral, mounted White Flank and rode rapidly up the river. At the same time Dick Milton and his gang rode up to the ranch and inquired who the man was that had just galloped away. Upon being informed that it was Nolan, Milton said: "He is just the man I have been looking for." He and Smith dashed away after Nolan as fast as their horses could carry them, shouting out for him to stop, as they were friends; but the faster they pursued the faster the outlaw flew. They had to give up the chase and return to the ranch. Wheat and Woods also returned to the ranch at the same time and left for Plum Creek the next morning. Nolan disappeared, but turned up some time after at the Chapin sheep ranch, near the present village of Arnold, which is now the property of ex-Sheriff C. T. Holliday. A photograph of the old log ranch house appears in another part of this work. One day a stranger rode up on a fine bay horse with white flanks. He carried a needle gun and made arrangements to get his meals for about a week. Mr. Chapin said the man "ould come in promptly at meal times, eat with his gun across his lap, then mount his horse and ride away, generally in the direction of Powell canon. He represented that he was waiting for some friends whom he expected along in a short time. Mr. Chapin and his wife were not very favorably impressed with the actions of their boarder, but as he appeared to be a perfect gentleman and paid promptly, they asked no questions. One day while the stranger was eating his dinner Mrs. Chapin was reading a paper which contained an item which greatly interested her, and she arose and passed out of the room, beckoning her husband to follow her. This little incident did not escape the watchful eye of Jack Nolan, and when he peered out of the door he saw Mr. and Mrs. Chapin carefully examining his horse. He stepped up to them, remarking: "I see you have discovered who I am and I want to give you a little advice. I want my meals and I am willing to pay for them. If you keep still, it will be all right; but if you try to make me trouble it will be the worse for you. I want you to understand that I will not be taken alive. He then told them the whole story of his pursuit by the cowboys and the sheriff, laughing heartily at the way in which he had discomfited them. As the ranchmen were at that time more or less at the mercy of such characters, it was considered good policy to treat them well and not get mixed up in their quarrels; therefore Mr. Chapin and his good wife are not to be censured if they kept the secret of the identity of their guest safely locked

within their own breasts. Dick Milton frequently stopped at the Chapin ranch and at one time presented Mr. Chapin with a gray horse that was somewhat ridden down, but which proved to be an excellent animal. He kept it about two years and sold it for a good price. This transaction came very near getting him into trouble, as it turned out that the horse had been



I. C. Cram, Loup County, Neb.

stolen and Chapin was threatened with arrest as an accomplice of Milton. Nolan next appeared at the North and Cody ranch on the Dismal river, near its mouth, remained there about three days, and then went up into the Niobrara country.

In the meantime Sheriff Dick James had returned to Plum Creek and sent his deputy, Valentine, to continue the hunt for Nolan. Valentine, it is said, told everybody he met that he was a great detective; that it was through his skill that the Olives had been put behind the bars, and that he intended to take Nolan back with him. One day while riding up on the Running Water he met a ranchman to whom he explained his business, embellishing the narrative with a very glowing description of Valentine's prowess as a thief catcher. Valentine was not yet out of sight when Jack Nolan rode up to the ranchman and inquired who the man was that had just left him. The ranchman related the conversation, after which Nolan put spurs to Old White Flank and swooped down on the unsuspecting detective. He held him up, took his horse and weapons and turned him loose in the middle of the desert, horseless and unarmed. Nolan, however, allowed the detective to retain his saddle, which he recognized as the property of Gatch Hughey, a boy who

carried "cluck" to the prisoners in the Plum Creek jail. It was hinted that Hughey had been instrumental in effecting the escape of Nolan from the jail, but nothing of the kind was ever proven. Gatch, it appears, was quite a vocalist, and the night that Nolan escaped had brought the prisoner his supper, and returned to the jail office. Nolan called out after him: "Gatch, can't you give us a song?" Gatch, who was a good-natured fellow, who would rather sing than work, launched out into a roaring ditty that lasted for some time. Nolan had previously sawed several bars of his cell nearly in two, and taking advantage of the noise that Gatch was making with his song he wrenched the bars off, slipped through and made his escape. At the conclusion of his vocal performance Gatch expected to hear some applause from Nolan, but a dead silence ensuing he made an examination and found the cell empty. As a mark of appreciation for the service rendered to him in his hour of need, Nolan returned to the detective Gatch's saddle which had been borrowed by the thief catcher when he set out on his hunt for the outlaw.

Nolan finally fell in with Milton, but they did not get along very well together. Milton recognized White Flank, traded Nolan out of him, and sent word to Olive where he could find him. Olive at once sent a man after the horse, which was in due time restored to his rightful owner. Some time after this Nolan robbed the Bone Creek postoffice and fled to Minnesota. Later he was captured, but what became of him your historian is unable to say, as he has not been able to trace further the career of one of the most daring outlaws that ever infested central Nebraska.

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## Judge William Gaslin.

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By F. M. Hallowell.

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Judge William Gaslin was born in Kennebec county, Maine, July 29, 1827. His parents and ancestors were among the hardy pioneers of the forests, whose mental and physical powers were fully developed by exposure, frugality and the hardest kind of manual labor. His grand parents and parents lived to be very old, most of them to an age between ninety and one hundred. The judge, during his boyhood, lived with his parents on a sterile, rocky farm, on which he labored when not working out by the month for small wages cutting lumber, part of the time taking trips at sea, after he was old enough to do so, at first serving as cook. When a child he attended a country school,

but only in the winters after he got large enough to work on the farm, the school house being about a mile distant; he had a love for study and was soon a good scholar. After he was able to earn money to pay his way, he attended an academy and fitted for and entered Bowdoin college in 1852, from which he graduated in 1856, having paid his own way by teaching school and earning money at anything he could do. Shortly after graduating he



HON. WM. GASLIN, Attorney.



F. M. HALLOWELL.

entered the office of Judge Samuel Titcomb in Augusta and commenced the study of law. Being without money he taught in the graded schools of Augusta, continuing the study of law during the spare time he had, hiring a house and moving his mother and young brother and sister into the city, the younger children attending the school he taught. After thus teaching nearly two years he had saved enough to enable him to continue his law studies, and so left school. After being admitted to practice law he opened an office in Augusta, the capital of the state, where there were fine lawyers, and took an active part in politics with his neighbors, among whom were the immortal James G. Blaine and Lot M. Morrill, and frequently coming in contact with Hannibal Hamlin and other eminent men of the state.

From money earned in teaching school and the little he could save from his salary as city clerk and other official positions, he fitted up an office in his native city with such books as he was able to get and commenced his law practice, walking four miles night and morning to and from his father's farm and so continued for two or three years.



It was very little business he had until a poor old widow, being robbed of her farm and home, came to him. Some of the best lawyers in the city told Gaslin in a friendly way that a great wrong and outrage was being done, but as the parties had a deed there was no chance for the old lady. Gaslin got the case put over nearly all summer while he was examining and copying the records, when away back he found a void levy on which the title adverse to the widow rested, and so won the case settling title in her and beat a collateral suit for possession against the old lady on the ground that the courts of the state held that an action of trespass on real estate could not be maintained where it had continued for more than six years. All he ever got from the old lady, who was ninety years old, was \$2.50, which a long time after she insisted on paying, though he asked her nothing. After winning these cases he did not want for business, which was owing as much to his indomitable energy as to his legal lore.

In 1865 his library, office and all its contents were consumed by a very disastrous fire which destroyed most of the business part of the city, and he left for the West, landing in Omaha over the Chicago & Northwestern railroad from Michigan, that being the only road across Iowa at that time; crossed the Missouri on the ferry March 26, 1868. Omaha was then a small, straggling place, most of the hotels and business places being on lower Farnam and Douglas streets.

Though the building of the Union Pacific railroad had passed that hell on earth, Julesburg, and got well into the mountains, and many of the worst characters had moved on in the procession of desperadoes and cut-throats, Omaha was still infested with a fearful gang; seventy-five men were killed the first year Gaslin was there, for which very few were even arrested or known. After remaining in Omaha until the spring of 1871, in June or the first of July, with a party of two or three others, with a span of hardy horses and wagon and camping outfit, struck for southwestern Nebraska, the B. & M. R. R. being then completed as far as Crete. They struck across the country to the Republican valley in Nuckols county and then up the valley to Colorado. The country was then little settled and west of Webster county no settlements of any consequence—two log buildings at Red Cloud and nothing worth mentioning beyond until the following year. Great herds of buffalo, bands of wolves, elk, deer and antelope and flocks of wild turkeys and grouse greeted the eye on all sides. On their return the party crossed the monotonous prairie on the divide between the Republican and Platte rivers, all totally uninhabited, and visited the northwesterly part of the state, which west of Hall county was very little settled. He returned to Omaha in August, when he took a homestead in Harlan county, filing his

papers at the land office in Beatrice; he spent the fearful winter of 1871-2 on his homestead, commuting the same next spring and taking a pre-emption on which he made the requisite improvements with his own hands.

In June, 1872, he went to Lowell, where the United States land office was opened in July, and opened an office and commenced the practice of law, to which place the B. & M. R. R. reached that fall and was its terminus for quite a while. Lowell was the terminus of the Texas cattle trail, vast herds reaching there in late spring or early summer, where the cattle were marketed and shipped east. The town was full of cowboys and cattlemen; saloons and gambling places were run wide open seven days and nights each week; little regard was paid to law; money was plenty and all kinds of business booming; thousands of settlers poured into the country, bringing their families, and took up claims and settling thereon, this being the outfitting place to southwestern Nebraska and for a long distance into Kansas. In a short time after the land office was opened seven men were shot and not one was punished for the crimes, and but one was tried, and he acquitted. About 1874 the land office was removed to Bloomington, in Franklin county, and the railroad extended to Kearney, and like Carthage, Babylon, Ninevah and Sandusky, Lowell fell.

In 1875 a constitutional convention was called. The convention divided the state into six judicial districts and created an independent supreme court. When the time approached for nomination of district judges, though not a candidate, Gaslin was urged to go before the Republican convention at Plum Creek, now Lexington, as a candidate, which he reluctantly consented to do. The campaign was lively and spirited, but Judge Gaslin was elected. When he ran for the second term, after civilizing and clearing the county of desperadoes and establishing law and order for four years, he had five votes more than the Republican and Democratic vote combined. When he was first elected his district embraced Webster, Adams, Buffalo, Sherman, Custer, the unorganized county of Sioux, extending north to the Dakota line, attached to Cheyenne county for judicial purposes, and all the state west of these counties, comprising at least one-half of the territory of the state. Adams, Kearney and Buffalo counties, reached by the B. & M. R. R., and Buffalo, Dawson, Lincoln, Keith and Cheyenne counties, traversed by the Union Pacific, were the only counties crossed by railroads when the judge first entered upon his judicial duties in January, 1876, there being thirteen counties besides the unorganized territory whose courts were held a long way from the railroad. At the end of his first term in 1879 he was nominated by the Republicans and indorsed by the Democrats, and was therefore elected with no opposition whatever. In the fall of 1883 he was again nominated by all parties and re-elected again

without opposition, and again in 1887 he was triumphantly re-elected. When he entered upon the discharge of his official duties as judge his district was infested with murderers, thieves, desperadoes and cut-throats of all grades and kind, and especially in Cheyenne, Lincoln and Kearney counties, and in fact, though the settlers on the public domain were first-class people, there were scattered all over the district the worst kind of criminals, and in almost all the counties there were the worst kind of murders and crimes committed, and on the cattle ranges, among the employes, were a large number of murderers and outlaws under assumed names who had fled from the South and extreme southwest part of the United States and Indian territory. The district was full of horse and cattle thieves. Sidney, in Cheyenne county, then the outfitting and shipping point on the Union Pacific to and from the Black Hills, and where there was a military post, was a very tough place, infested by many of the very worst characters, and everything was run wide open without restraint.

Ogallala, while it was the terminus of the southern cattle trail, was another place where the worst kind of criminals congregated, and North Platte was well represented by a similar class. Judge Gaslin's experience in his younger days with toughs and criminals, coming in contact with them as he went to sea and in knocking around the world, and the way he had seen justice dealt out in Canada and Great Britain, caused him to profit by his observations and to put a stop to crime by dealing out speedy, sure and severe punishment to confirmed and abandoned criminals, contending that the way to eradicate crime was to severely punish it, and he had the courage and nerve to fearlessly execute the law without fear or favor of any one. Being a man in his prime, and of iron will, untiring industry and application to the discharge of his judicial duties, and possessed of a strong constitution and physique of steel and perfectly fearless, running his courts from early morn until late at night, disposing of the business without any frills or delays and doing it as fast as it could be well done and imposing severe sentences on those who deserved them, he soon rid the country of the worst of the criminals and inaugurated a reign of law and order, making life and property safe. It was indeed fortunate that such a man was elected at that time. The people of the state, and especially those living in the old Fifth district are much indebted to him and owe him a debt of gratitude for what he did for them. His clean-cut, unsophisticated, blunt, crisp way of running his court and dispatching business made him many enemies among the lawyers, none of whom had any pull on him, as, indeed, no one else. The first three years he was judge he presided over twenty-six murder trials, during the first six years forty-six, and during the sixteen years he was judge he presided

over sixty-eight and other cases of felony would have to be numbered by the hundred—in fact, during his term as judge, the warden of the penitentiary regarded him as one of his most reliable patrons.

Though Judge Gaslin's district embraced about one-half of the state, and he traveled by wagon to reach two-thirds of the counties of the district, and had more criminal business than there was in any two districts in the state, yet he disposed of it all by holding court less than one-third of the time.

Judge Gaslin, hale and hearty, is now residing at Kearney, where he has been quietly practicing law since he left the bench in 1892, spending the winter of that year, just prior to settling in Kearney, traveling in Old Mexico.

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## Settlement of New Helena.

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C. R. Mathews.

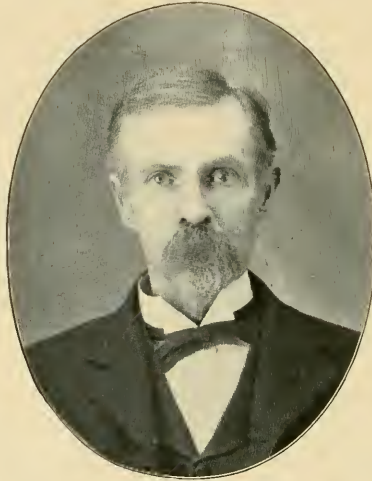
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The writer of this sketch was born in Virginia in 1843. At the close of the Rebellion the state was so heavily laden with debt that every kind of business was at a standstill, and there were few openings. In the fall of 1873 I was at Richmond attending a horticultural and pomological fair, where I was greatly struck by a grand display of the products of Nebraska. I there made up my mind that the great fertile west was the place for me, and from that time until I set my foot on this side of the Missouri I had a bad case of western fever.

In the spring of 1874 I helped to organize a party of eleven to go to Nebraska. The party consisted of C. R. Mathews, Amos Broughan, Wat Sifford, H. B. Andrews, George Snyder and wife, William King, W. P. Tolley, Henry Lemon, J. H. Withers and a man by the name of Circle, whose first name I have forgotten. We arrived at Omaha on the 4th day of April, 1874. From Omaha we proceeded to Kearney, and thence to Loup City. At this place we hired an outfit for the purpose of exploring the unorganized territory in the Middle Loup country, fording that river at a point near where the village of Wescott now stands. There were no roads of any kind, and we pushed on over hills and across valleys, through thickets of plum brush, not knowing what moment we would meet with some obstacle that would compel us to retrace our steps. When we reached Lillian creek it commenced snowing furiously. The banks of the creek were high and steep and the channel was



full of running water. Not being able to find any better crossing place, we went to work and shaved the bank down, carried our load over a little at a time, and succeeded in landing our outfit safely on the opposite side of the creek. The storm increased to a regular blizzard and we concluded to camp there for the night. The wagon box was taken off and braced up on its side to afford us some protection from the fury of the blast that now howled over



Ex-County Judge C. R. Matthews.

the prairie driving the blinding snow into our faces with stifling force. Andrews climbed a large cottonwood tree, cut off some dead limbs, and soon had a blazing fire around which we lay wrapped up in our blankets, taking turns keeping up the fire through the night. The following morning was clear and bright and after a hasty breakfast we proceeded up the Middle Loup valley through big drifts of snow that made our journey both slow and tiresome. Near the mouth of Victoria creek we met some trappers who described the beauties of Victoria valley, with pure, cold springs gushing from its sides here and there. We followed up the creek until we came out on the hill just east of the present site of New Helena. We descended to the creek, but found the banks so steep that we had to bring into play a couple of long cedar poles that had evidently been used by Indians or trappers. We laid these across the narrow channel, pushed our wagon over on this frail bridge and resumed our journey in a northwesterly direction about two miles and a half until we struck what is known in Custer county as the Big Cedar canons. The one which we entered was a dense forest of cedar and other trees, with an under-

growth so thick that it could hardly be penetrated. Pushing our way along this canon we emerged into a small clearing in the center of which stood an Indian wigwam. A cold chill ran over the party, but we soon discovered that the wigwam was empty, and took possession, spending a very comfortable night therein. After looking the country over a day or two we returned to Loup City, procured the necessary equipments for starting improvements on the claims we had selected, and were soon located in our new homes in the wilderness. This little settlement consisted of H. B. Andrews, Edward Nelson and the writer. Our nearest neighbors were at Loup City, a little village of about 100 inhabitants, where we did our trading. It was sixty miles from us. In the month of May, the same year, I met, at Loup City, George E. Carr and O. A. Smith, who had just arrived from Pennsylvania, and whom I induced to locate near us. The next settler was Ezra A. Caswell. Thomas Loughran took a claim further down the creek near the Middle Loup river. About the first of June Jacob Ross, with a large family of grown-up daughters, made quite a welcome addition to our little community. About this time the grasshoppers came along and devoured everything in the way of crops all over the state, a calamity which bore particularly hard on us, as our first crop in the county was completely destroyed before it was ready to harvest.

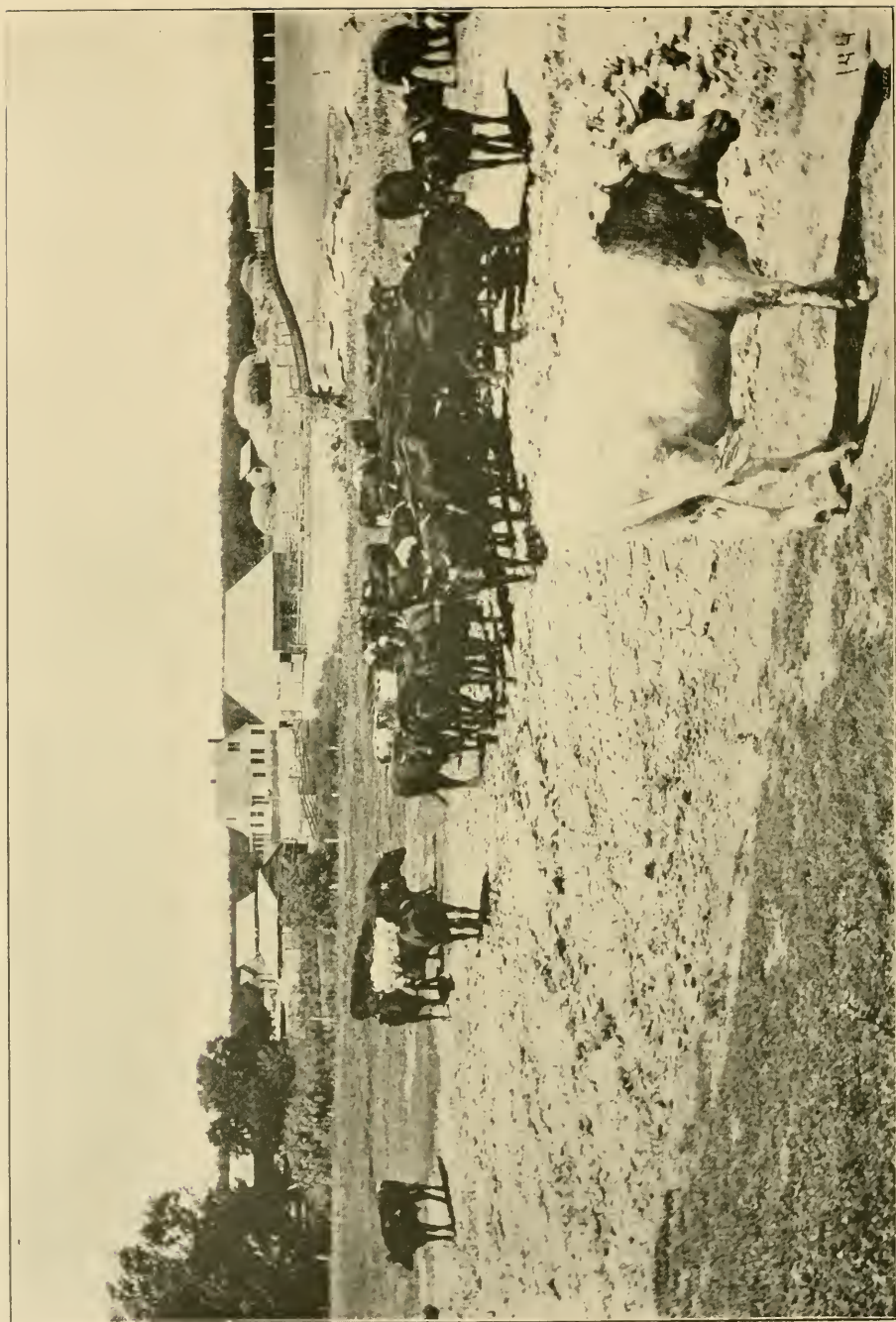
In the spring of 1875 Nathaniel H. Dryden and family, J. R. Forsythe and J. P. Bell came into the county.

In September, 1874, I had the honor of being a delegate to the representative convention which met at Plum Creek. This representative district at that time embraced seventeen counties and was entitled to one member. M. V. Moudy of Lowell, Kearney county, received the nomination and was elected.

In 1875 we had abundant crops and immigration commenced to flow rapidly into the unorganized territory.

During the winter of 1874-5 I circulated a petition asking the authorities at Washington to establish a mail route from Kearney via Loup City, Arcadia and Douglass Grove, to New Helena, and we received the first mail over the route on April 15, 1875. I was appointed postmaster at this place, my commission bearing the date February 9, 1875. Aaron Crouch, the mail carrier, received the mail at this office every Saturday.

In May, 1876, there was a general uprising of the Sioux Indians, who resented the intrusion of parties who were at that time pushing through to the Black Hills. Most of the settlers in this county packed up their goods and hastened to Loup City. We rallied a few of the settlers and built a fort of cedar logs. I applied to Governor Garber for fourteen stands of arms



Stock Farm of David Christen, on Victoria Creek, near New Helena.



and 2,000 rounds of cartridges, which we received, and most of the families that had flown came back.

Isaac Merchant, George Carr, Jacob Ross, W. O. Boley, Samuel Wagner and his son, William, and the writer remained in the settlement while the other male members were removing the women and children to a place of safety. Our fears proved to be groundless, however. No Indians came to molest us, although a hunting party of Sioux camped for some time a few miles north of us. Most of the settlers came back that fall, a few only remaining away until the following spring.

This was formerly known as Kountz county, being so named after the banking firm of Kountz Brothers of Omaha.

In the fall of 1877 the Olive brothers came into the county with 15,000 head of cattle and established a ranch near the mouth of the Dismal river. Their cattle spread all over the western half of Custer county, causing untold trouble to the settlers. The cattlemen employed a lot of rough men from Texas, who had no respect for the rights of anybody. The writer has spent many a long night in keeping cattle out of his cornfield. One incident will serve to show the annoyance to which we were subjected by these lawless characters.

I had been contemplating a trip to Douglass Grove late in November, and had gathered ten or twelve bushels of corn to leave at the house to feed my stock while I was gone. It was in sacks in a wagon and I intended to start the next morning. That evening Bob Olive, alias Stevens, rode up with about a dozen of his cowboys and twenty-five or thirty ponies. He walked into the house without going through the formality of knocking at the door, and remarked that it was "awful d—d cold." He kindly told me that if I would give him enough corn to feed his herd of ponies that he would not turn them out to help themselves. I told him that I hoped he would not turn the horses out, as they would tear down my stacks and that he could have all the corn he wanted if he would go out in the field and husk it.

"What is the matter with this corn in the wagon?" he inquired.

"That is corn I brought up for my hogs while I am gone to Douglass Grove," I explained.

He made no further remark, but deliberately emptied the corn out on the ground, where it was soon eaten up by the horses. The outfit concluded to stay with me all night without asking my permission, helped themselves to my coffee and anything else they could find, wrapped themselves up in their blankets and went to sleep. Olive was taken sick during the night with cholera morbus and routed his men out to see if anything for his relief could be found in the settlement. There was no doctor within eighty miles, so



they went to Mr. Boley's and came back with a bottle of camphor. Mrs. Ross also let them have a bottle of camphor, and Mrs. Forsyth, for a change, sent another bottle of camphor. Mrs. Loughran and Mrs. Merchant, having no other kind of medicine in their houses, also sent a bottle of camphor apiece. As the men came in one after the other with the camphor, Bob got as mad as a hornet and smashed the bottles on a saddle that hung in a corner of the room. During the same night our neighbor, Smith, had the honor of entertaining two or three of the cowboys. They piled into the bed alongside of him, with their clothes on, and enjoyed a good night's rest. When I got up the next morning I found one of my stacks of grain torn down and five or six horses on top of it.

At one time Judge Holbrook of Kearney county, and the Sutton brothers of Kearney, Buffalo county, went up on the Dismal on a hunting excursion. They did not return, and the next spring their bodies were found pierced with bullets. Robbery did not appear to have been the motive for the murder, as nothing had been taken from their camp and their money and valuables were found on their persons. Two of the bodies were found lying near the camp and the other some distance away, and it is not known to this day who committed the horrible crime.

In the year 1878 the little settlement on Victoria creek raised good crops and as a better class of cattle men began to establish ranches in the country the settlers got good prices for all the grain and produce they had to sell. Henry Smith and Ernest Tee located a ranch on the Middle Loup river about fifteen miles from New Helena, and the Finch-Hatton brothers one up near the mouth of the Dismal in the fall of 1878. About this time the settlers in the northern part of the county became dissatisfied on account of the great distance to a polling place, which practically disfranchised them. The Legislature was asked to enact into law a bill which I drafted and which passed. Following is the bill:

"Each board of county commissioners shall divide the county into convenient precincts, and as occasion requires subdivide precincts or erect new precincts, alter precinct lines and whenever any portion of territory containing in the aggregate not less than one township of land nor more than four townships lying contiguous shall contain not less than fifteen voters, it shall be the duty of the board of county commissioners, upon receipt of a petition signed by a majority of such voters, to constitute such territory a new voting precinct."

In the spring and summer of 1879 the crops gave promise of an abundant harvest and the settlers looked forward to a good return for their labor. They were celebrating the Fourth of July in the most approved style, eating,

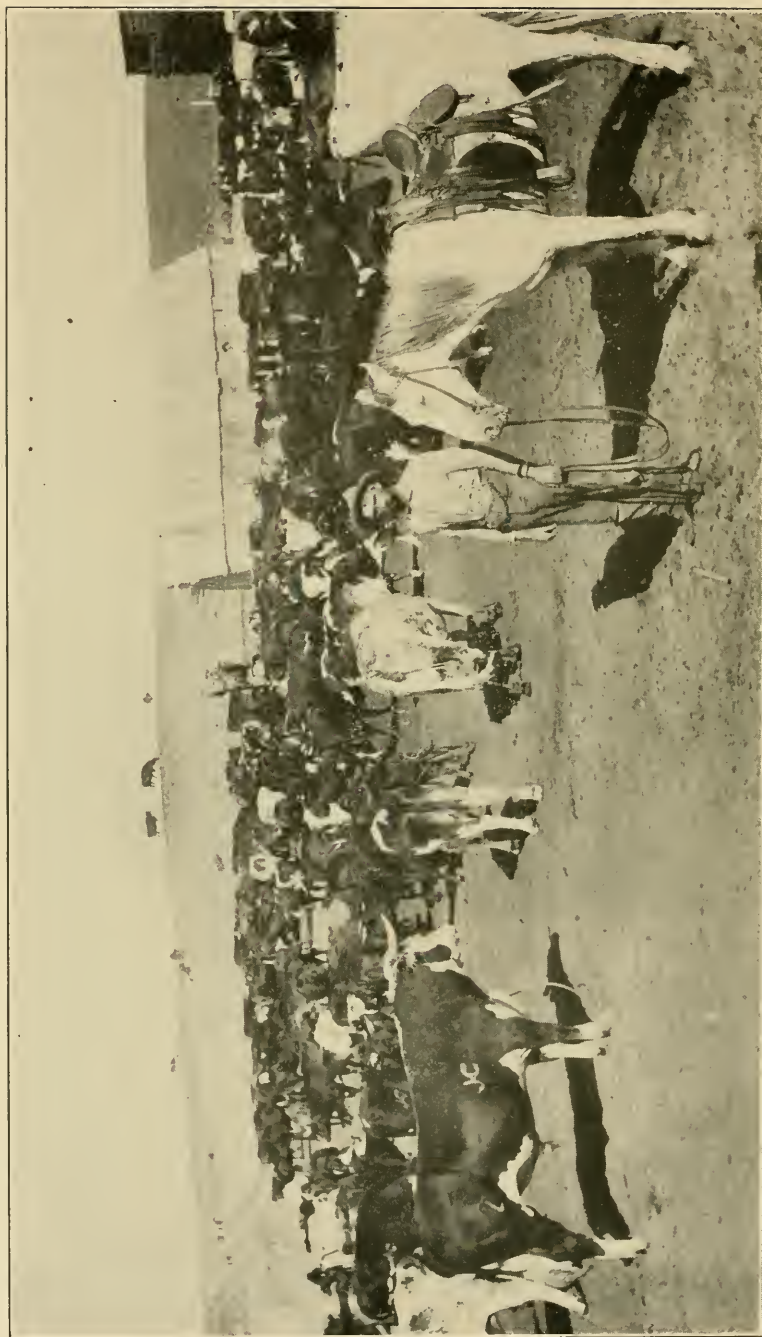
drinking and making merry, when a cloud no bigger than a man's hand was observed in the northwest, which grew with alarming rapidity until it overspread the whole heavens, and out of it came one of the most destructive hail storms this county ever experienced. The crops were literally beaten into the earth. Not a bushel of grain was harvested in Victoria valley that year. A few turnips sown after the hail storm were the only crop produced in that section. The log school house where the settlers were gathered to celebrate the Fourth, had three windows on the north side. The glass was broken into fragments by the hail, after which George Carr attempted the impossible feat of keeping out the storm by covering the three windows at one time with a blackboard long enough only to cover two. Men, women and children crowded into the building, terror stricken, some crying, some praying, and, I am sorry to record it, a few swearing. The hail streak was about four miles wide and passed down Clear creek, cleaning out the crops completely in its course. The settlers had to haul their feed and seed for the next year from Grand Island and Central City, 120 and 130 miles distant. In 1880 we had good crops, but the hardships and privations of these pioneer days have been lived through, and while some have fallen by the wayside and still others gone to "the land beyond the river," many of us remain to enjoy the fruits of our early trials, proud of our noble county and its splendid citizenship, and confident of its continued growth and development.

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## Exploits of Dick Milton.

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The word "outlaw" sounds harsh to the average individual, and the thought at once presents itself to the mind that the person to whom it is applied must be a desperate character, and one having no right to life or liberty. This is altogether an erroneous idea. An outlaw is a man who in some way has violated the law of our land, and a very trifling thing may put one outside the pale of the law. The history of the individual whose name heads this sketch proves that the force of circumstances, rather than any inherent bad disposition, often causes men to lead lives which with other surroundings would be very much different. And while in his time Milton was accounted one of the most depraved outlaws that infested the plains, he has since reformed and rendered important service to the officers of the law.



Catterson & Saunders, Catle Ranch on Middle Loup.

Dick Milton, which is not his true name, but which will suffice for this narrative, was born in Texas and came to Nebraska in 1875 over the trail of the immense herds of cattle as a cowboy. In 1876, during the Black Hills excitement, he worked for a big freighting outfit, Pratt & Ferris. He was night herder. It was his duty to take the mules or oxen belonging to the



Powell Canon on the left of picture. A boy is standing on the stump of the tree where the hunter's team was found.

outfit at night to some convenient feeding ground near the trail, herd them during the night and have them ready for a start in the morning. He slept in the wagons during the day as they traveled along. Roving bands of Indians infested the plains at this early day and they resented the encroachment of the white man, following wagon trains and watching for a chance to pillage and murder. This made the duty of night herder extremely dangerous, and it took a man of iron nerve to serve in that capacity. The wages were high. Milton performed his work faithfully and to the entire satisfaction of his employers. It is on one of the return trips of this freighting outfit, at Sidney, Nebraska, that the career of this man, as an outlaw, begins. And, as far as we know, what transpired at this time and place laid the foundation for his many wild and daring deeds of outlawry.

At that time Sidney was an important station on the overland trail. It was an outfitting station for Black Hills freighters, a favorite resort for gamblers, desperadoes and the shifting and heterogeneous population of the border. It was also a military post. Among the many saloons and gambling houses that ran wide open in this lively frontier city, one of the most popular



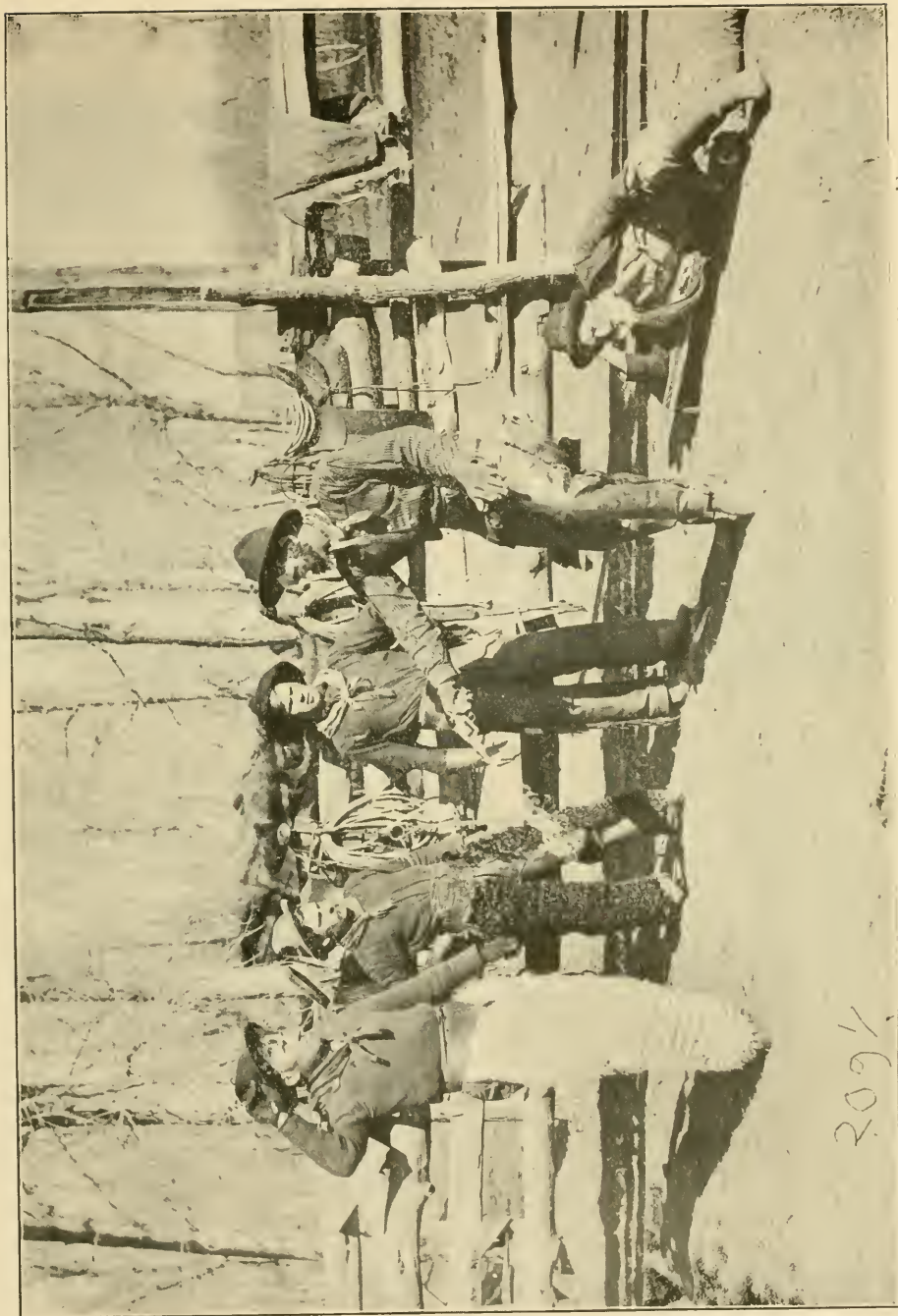
was Joe Lane's dance hall, known in early days as the Saratoga house. On the night upon which the Pratt & Ferris freighting outfit struck the town, as mentioned above, this resort was filled to overflowing with a mixed crowd of freighters, mule skimmers and others who had just come in for loads of freight for the Black Hills, watching for opportunities to flirt with the feminine portion of the crowd. This diversion was a great change from the monotony of their lives, traveling for days and weeks at a snail's pace over the long, dusty trail, sleeping in wagons at night with a Winchester for a pillow and expecting to be awakened at any moment by the blood-curdling war whoop of a band of savages. On this occasion they were determined to throw care to the winds for one night and have a good time. The place was full of gamblers, cowboys and bad men galore, seemingly from all parts of the earth. Some were gathered in groups in front of the bar drinking, others were singing snatches of ribald songs, while still others were watching the dancers who were whirling around in the giddy waltz. It was soldiers' night, and no one was allowed to participate in the dance unless he wore the uniform of blue. The hours glided by and the crowd became more mellow and the dance wilder. White-aproned waiters were kept busy rushing to and fro with drinks that were called for with increasing frequency by soldiers who were anxious to show their gallantry to their fair companions, even to the extent of blowing in their whole month's pay in a single night. The crowd around the bar grew more boisterous as the hours passed by, and drunken men wrangled and boasted of deeds that would bring the blush of shame to even their cheeks in their soberer moments. Milton and a friend were standing near a soldier and his fair companion. The soldier wore the straps of a sergeant. As the dance stopped for a moment the girl turned to Milton and, shaking her blonde curls saucily, taunted him about being out of luck in not wearing a uniform that he might join in the dance. The sergeant was greatly displeased with this familiarity upon the part of his companion with a common herder of mules and oxen, and at the next pause in the dance he tried to force a fight with the young man, who tried to avoid any trouble. We have it from an eye witness that what followed was entirely the fault of the hot-headed sergeant, who forced the fight which ended his career. In a moment everything was confusion and uproar in the place and the two men were locked in a fierce struggle. The music ceased and a stampede was made for that part of the room in which the fight was going on. It was a mob of drunken and liquor-crazed men and women. Milton was getting the best of his antagonist when the other soldiers in the room took a hand in the fight and kicked and beat the herder unmercifully. The sharp report of a revolver was heard in the melee and the sergeant fell back into the arms of one of

his friends. The lights were suddenly extinguished, leaving the great hall in total darkness and pandemonium indescribable. The trampling and fighting of the mob to reach the open air can be better imagined than described, and we leave the reader to imagine the scene that followed. The poor herder escaped in the darkness and confusion. A price was set upon his head. Friends offered to furnish money to defend him if he would stand a trial. He avoided his pursuers for a time, was finally captured and escaped to the wilds of northern Nebraska, which was at that time, to a great extent, unorganized territory, where bad men roamed at will knowing no law but the six-shooter and the bowie knife. Whenever he tried to work the blood-hounds of the law would get on his track and he was compelled to move on. At last he gathered a band of daring outlaws around him and it is said did a wholesale business in running off whole herds of ponies belonging to the Indians, and becoming a terror to law-abiding citizens. Milton fell in with a young man about twenty-five years of age, five feet ten inches tall, a fine looking fellow with dark hair and eyes, the last man on earth that one would have taken for an outlaw. This man and Milton took a liking to each other and naturally fell in as pals. For convenience we will call the young man Ed Smith. He and Milton seemed to be natural leaders and planned many daring raids which were carried out by the band. The Sioux Indians had thousands of ponies in the southwestern part of Dakota and the northwestern part of Nebraska, and this band would go up into that country, four or five strong, find a bunch of ponies ranging in the hills, wait until night and then drive seventy-five or a hundred of them south, traveling night and day until they were beyond danger of pursuit by the Indians. They would strike the North Platte river west of the town of North Platte, find a certain well known ranchman, sell the bunch, turn them across the river between the two forks, then come back and drift down the South Loup river. They soon became very well known all over the central portion of the state. Milton and Smith were both men of good address, pleasant sort of fellows, and assumed great credit to themselves because they never stole horses except from the Indians. In the degenerate days of the present, the code of morals by which these men regulated their conduct would appear a trifle lame, but in the wild days of which we are writing the aborigine was considered a common enemy who had no rights which white men were bound to respect or even consider. It is said that at one time Milton and Smith, with three men, made a dash on a bunch of horses and succeeded in getting about 140 of them. The Indians had lost so many ponies that they had become cautious and night-herded them, making it more difficult for the thieves to get the start of them. There was a short time, however, between the watches in the even-



This shows a cowboy making an old man dance by shooting at his feet, while the other cowboys look on, evidently enjoying the sport, when Dick Milton appears on the scene, not being noticed by the cowboys.





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Being unable to see the brute of a cowboy abuse the old man longer, Dick Milton motioned the old man to one side and gave the cowboy a dose of his own medicine.





Ed Smith and Dick Milton watching an opportunity to run off a band of Sioux ponies.

ing when the ponies were not guarded. Taking advantage of this, Milton and his men made a bold dash, knowing that they were taking desperate chances. They crowded the herd at full speed all night, not knowing how soon they would have to turn and fight the pursuing owners of the horses. They headed for the Platte river, as usual, keeping their booty on the move night and day until they crossed the Middle Loup river, keeping a sharp lookout all the time for the savages. Not having seen anything of them, after crossing the Middle Loup they were lulled into security, and as men and beasts were alike worn out by their rapid and ceaseless flight, they concluded to stop in a small valley for a little needed rest and refreshment, and to let the ponies feed. Turning all their saddle horses loose with the herd of ponies, with the exception of one which they put on a lariat, they lay down to take a nap. They little dreamed that savage eyes were watching them from a high bluff a short distance in the rear. When they awoke they found themselves afoot and alone, many miles from any habitation, with very little provision and no horses, except the one that had been picketed near their camp. A man was put in the saddle and sent in hot pursuit of the horses, which they supposed had gone off of their own accord, but when he

came in sight of them he was thunderstruck to find that they were being driven back by a score of Sioux warriors. It is a mystery to this day why the Indians did not kill and scalp the men while they slept. Perhaps they had heard the old saw: "It is best to let sleeping dogs alone." When the man returned to the camp with the news of this alarming discovery a consultation was held, and one of their number was dispatched for provisions and a new mount of horses.

A short time after this adventure Milton and Smith, with two or three others, were reconnoitering a large Sioux camp on the Niobrara river. Just as they had reached a position southwest of the camp a band of Sioux came dashing upon them from the southwest with a war whoop. They were on a ridge. To go west or south meant death at the hands of the savages, who were closing in on them from both of these points. To go east would take them into the Indian camp, which was now all confusion, with the savages running to and fro, catching their ponies and securing weapons, having been aroused by the war whoop of their companions. All the show for escape was to the north towards the river, which they proceeded to make for as fast as their horses could carry them, the savages only a little behind them in full pursuit, rending the morning air with their blood-curdling yells. In a few minutes the flying white men were on the bank of the stream, which they found to their dismay to be straight up over ten feet above the water. There was no time to look for a better crossing. The Indians, knowing the situation and feeling certain that they had the enemy at bay, redoubled their yells and rushed forward like a pack of demons. There was but one alternative open to the hapless Milton and his companions, and that was a leap for life into the boiling flood below. The leap was made, horses and riders disappearing under the icy cold waters of the river, but soon emerging and reaching a small island in the middle of the stream, covered with a dense growth of underbrush, into which they pulled themselves and horses and prepared to defend themselves in case they were followed. But the Sioux did not follow, and contented themselves by firing a few shots into the thicket which did no damage.

A funny anecdote is told of Milton when visiting a cattle ranch at one time. A cowboy was having an immensely good time by making an old man dance. Every time the old man would stop the cowboy would shoot at his feet and make him go at it again, until he was almost exhausted. Milton looked on a few minutes and thought he would take a hand in the game. He motioned the old man to one side and ordered the cow puncher to give an exhibition of his skill as a terpsichorean artist. The cowboy thought Milton was joking at first, and hesitated, but a shot from an ugly looking gun plough-

ing up the dirt about an inch from his big toe set his feet to going, and he had an opportunity to quit only when he dropped down in a heap from sheer exhaustion. When he recovered his breath and his senses he was advised to take some one of his own size and age the next time he wanted any fun of that sort.

Upon another occasion Milton was riding along the Niobrara river when he discovered another horseman riding along leisurely ahead of him, going the same way. He spurred up his horse and was soon alongside the stranger, who was a gawky young country bumpkin, about eighteen years of age, with a big revolver stuck in his belt, and wearing high boots with red tops. The following conversation took place:

"Hello, young man; where are you bound?"

"Well, I'm bound west just now."

"I'm going the same way and I'll accompany you. Are you a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes, sir. I have been to see my brother up in Holt county, and there is a d—d old horse thief named Dick Milton who is scaring everybody out of their wits. I wish I could get a look at him. He couldn't scare me."

Milton looked the green looking fellow over and concluded, to use a western phrase, that he was "windy." They jogged along chatting sociably for awhile, the young fellow taking occasion every few minutes to express his opinion of the horse thief. Milton finally became tired of this sort of thing, and drew his revolver out and said:

"Young man, you are talking to Dick Milton," at the same time reaching over and taking the revolver out of the young fellow's belt. "Now, young man, you're entirely too fresh for this country, and I'll have to ask you to turn that outfit over to me and hoof it if you are going any farther."

The boy took the matter very coolly and replied:

"Well, you have the drop on me. You are perfectly welcome to the outfit, but it's pretty tough on a fellow to be turned loose a-foot ten miles from anywhere."

"Never mind, young man; it will teach you a lesson not to be so funny the next time you meet a stranger; so now you had better get off that horse and take to your hoofs."

The boy paid no attention to this invitation, but continued to argue the matter until it was finally agreed that he might ride until they came to a sheep camp a few miles ahead, where he was to turn his horse over to his companion. They rode along, talking about this and that, and every little while the boy would scratch his leg furiously, make a wry face and complain that the fleas were eating him up, which he said he had gotten at the ranch where



he had slept last night. Milton paid no attention to the actions of the boy in his fight with the fleas. When but a short distance from the sheep ranch where the boy was to deliver up his horse, Milton, who had been looking the other way, turned towards the boy and found himself looking down the barrel of an ugly looking revolver which the young man had fished out of his boot during one of his excursions after fleas.

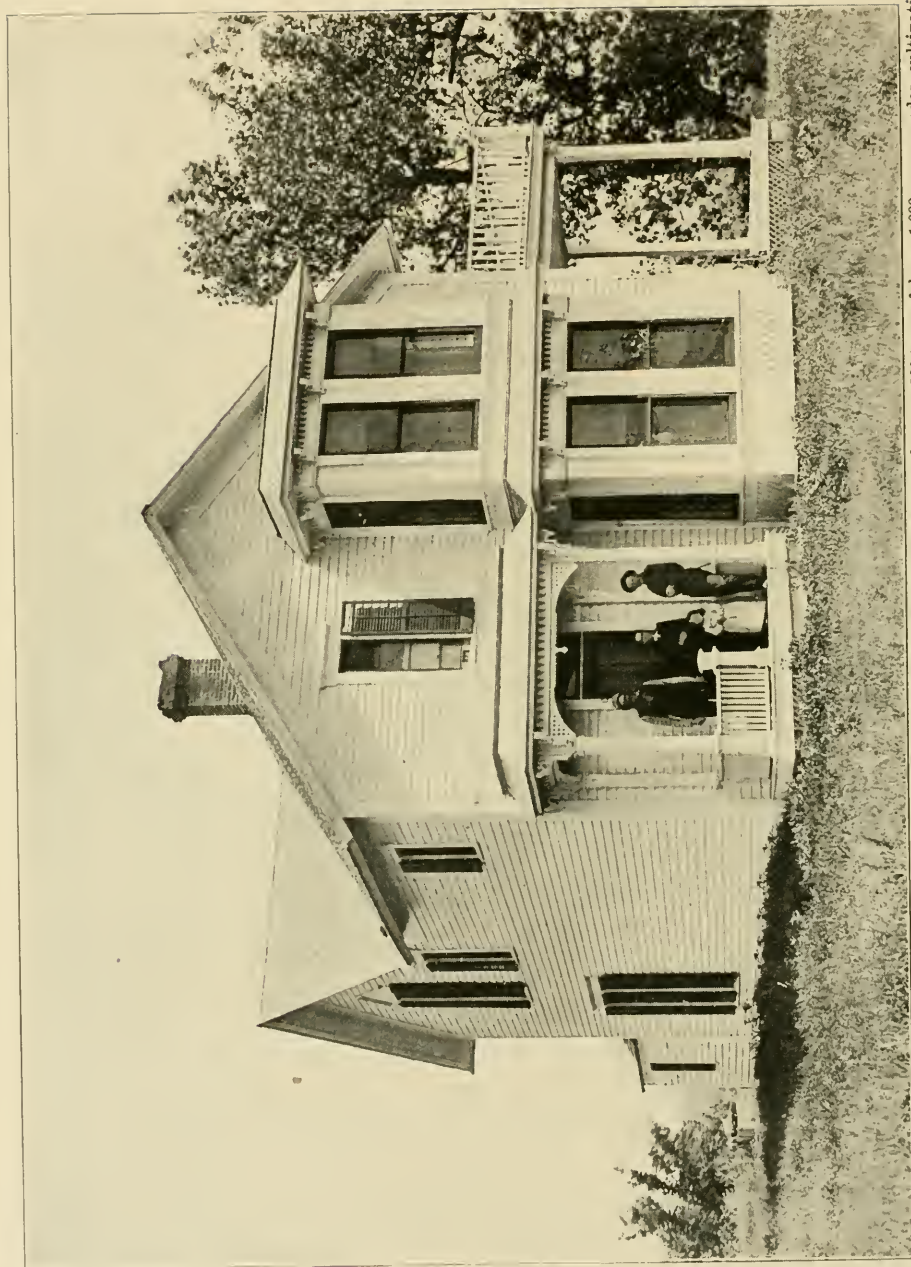
"Now, sir, you turn over them shootin' irons and you hoof it."

Milton saw by the determined look in the boy's face that he had caught a bad man, and thinking discretion the better part of valor, surrendered as gracefully as possible under the circumstances, while the kid coolly divested him of his arms and also the revolver which he had taken so adroitly from the boy but a few moments before.

Then, riding backwards on his horse, rode off, leading Milton's horse and covering Milton with his own Winchester, till, reaching a small hill, he placed his fingers to his nose and disappeared. Milton was never able to locate him, but we have our suspicions that it was the same green looking youth held up by the vigilants at Carnes' bridge, and who found they had caught a tartar. (See Lynching of Kid Wade.)

In the fall and winter of 1878 Smith and Milton made the South Loup their headquarters, Olive's ranch being a favorite resort. The ranchmen did not care to make enemies of these men, as their stock were scattered from ten to twenty miles in every direction, and were at the mercy of such characters unless they took the Judge Lynch method of disposing of them. For this reason they were allowed to stay about the ranches by common consent. Milton and Smith had some amusing experiences in dodging the sheriffs, Pat O'Brien of Custer county, and Dick James of Dawson county. Both of these officers would have liked to capture the outlaws for the sake of the reward that was offered. Pat O'Brien called on several ranchmen one night to help capture them. Among the men present were Al Wise, Frank Cozad, Milo Young and Anton Abel. The men were supposed to be at the Olive ranch, which was surrounded and watched the long night through; only to find in the morning that the birds had flown and were discovered on a high bluff near by with a field glass marking the besiegers for future reckoning. That day the two daring men called on every man who had been in the party and gave each to understand that in case the offense was repeated that they might expect trouble. They played a game of hide and seek with the sheriff for several days. O'Brien would ride up to Al Wise and inquire if he had seen Milton to-day. Upon receiving an answer in the negative he would ride away to interview the next neighbor. About as soon as he was out of sight Milton would ride up and inquire of Al if he had seen anything of Pat





Young Ranch at month of Spring Creek. Contains 3,000 acres; winters 800 head of cattle; cuts 500 tons of hay; 1,000 acres under cultivation; 500 in corn and like amount in wheat, all under fence; two graneries which hold 6,000 bushels wheat, and out-houses too numerous to mention; frame house which cost \$3,500. Telephone system which connects with nearly every town in the county.

O'Brien that day. Upon being informed that the gentleman had just that moment disappeared over the hill, he would get off his horse, help Al with whatever work he was doing for a while, and then ride off in the wake of the sheriff. One day he was at the Olive ranch, when who should walk in but Pat O'Brien. Quick as lightning Milton was on his feet with a 44 Colt's almost in the face of the astonished sheriff, who, for an instant, thought his time had come, as he looked down the muzzle of the huge weapon that almost tickled his nose.

Milton coolly said: "Are you looking for me, Pat?"

"N—No, sir," gasped Pat.

With an oath the other replies: "Well, Pat, it's an awful good thing that you're not."

With this he made his way to the door, covering the sheriff with his revolver as he backed out, and disappeared. O'Brien remained in the house for a short time chatting, and when he went out found that Milton had taken his horse and left him to go a-foot.

One night Milton and Smith were stopping at the Cottonwood ranch, near where Callaway now stands, when the mail carrier drove up and handed John Dyer a letter. Smith stepped up and said: "I wouldn't mind seeing that letter."

Dyer tried to put him off by telling him it was from his sister. Smith coolly pulled his gun, took the letter, read it and passed it over to Milton.

The letter read as follows:

Plum Creek, Neb., 187—.

Mr. Dyer:

Dear Sir—Dick James is coming out to arrest M. and S. You will give him all the assistance you can. Yours truly,

PHIL DUFRAND.

The writer of the letter was foreman of the Cottonwood ranch, and at this time was in the Plum Creek jail as an accomplice of the Olive gang, and Dyer had been left to take care of the ranch during the enforced absence of the regular foreman.

Smith turned to Dyer and said: "I guess I'll have to trouble you for a fresh horse this morning, as mine is rather jaded."

Dufrand had a fine driving team by the name of Frank and Fox and Smith saddled Fox and the two outlaws rode away. It is needless to say that Dick James and his posse made a waterhaul. As soon as James had gone back to Plum Creek the two men returned and Smith left the horse he had borrowed in the morning and took his own.

The last time that Milton and Smith were in Custer county was in 1879. They were stopping at the Olive ranch, and Kid Wade and Black Bill were with them. When next heard of they were at the Water Hole ranch, fourteen miles north of Sidney. They had gone from the Olive ranch to the Cottonwood ranch and took Frank and Fox with them. Jim Gray, a cowboy, who was sleeping in the barn, put up a stiff fight, but the outlaws returned his shots with interest whenever the flash of his revolver showed where Gray was. They got away with the horses just to pay off Phil Dufrand for trying to help capture them. From the Cottonwood they proceeded, first making a call at the Brighton ranch and Frank Cozad's. While at the Water Hole ranch the officers got wind of their whereabouts, and they prevailed upon a gambler and desperado, named McDonald, who was acquainted with Milton, to go out and persuade the two men to come to Sidney. Milton was too wary to be caught in that way, but Smith (being a stranger) took the chances and accompanied the gambler back, riding Dufrand's horse, Fox. McDonald persuaded Smith not to go heavily armed, as it would arouse suspicion. As they entered Sidney they rode through a freighter's camp, when the officers sprang out and shouted: "Throw up your hands!" At the same moment McDonald jerked away Smith's revolver and pinned his arms to his side. Smith threw himself from his horse, wrenched himself loose from McDonald's grasp, and would have gotten away had an officer not filled him with a load of buckshot which ended his career on the spot. Milton heard of this and made his escape to a more congenial clime. A short time after this McDonald murdered a liveryman in cold blood at Sidney, which so incensed the citizens that they took him out to a telegraph pole, placed a ladder against it, fixed a rope with a hanging noose and gave him the choice of hanging himself or having it done by them. The miserable wretch, seeing that there was no escape for him, climbed the ladder, adjusted the rope about his neck, said "good day, gentlemen," and jumped off into eternity.

Detectives soon got on Milton's trail and determined to capture him by fair means or foul. They sent him word that they had a pardon for him, signed by the governor, which in order to become effective would have to be signed by Milton, with a promise to lead a better life in the future. Of course this was a ruse to get hold of Milton, but it appears that he took it in good faith. A meeting was had and Milton agreed to sign the document and reform. Hazen and Llewellyn, the two detectives, and Kid Wade, accompanied by Milton, started to a house to get pen and ink to sign the paper. There was a dense thicket on the road which they had to pass by on their way to the house and the detectives had previously placed a man in this thicket to kill Milton as he passed by, as it did not appear to be a part of their plan to



try to take him alive. They rode toward the thicket, Llewellyn ahead, Wade next, Milton third and Hazen behind. As they got opposite the timber the man concealed attempted to carry out his part of the program, but his gun missed fire, and quick as a flash of lightning Milton saw that he was in a trap. He turned and shot at Hazen, who had dropped from his horse on the opposite side and who shot Milton very badly through the hip, causing him to fall from his horse which galloped away carrying his Winchester with him, which no doubt saved the detective's life. With an oath Milton chased Hazen around his horse, saying: "You have given me my death wound and I'll give you yours," shooting him three times and leaving him for dead. The man in the thicket did not stop to see who came out ahead in the fight, but got away from the vicinity as fast as he could. As he played the part of a murderer and a coward we will not chronicle his name. As soon as the shooting commenced Kid Wade drew his revolver and commenced firing at Llewellyn, and it is said that an exciting running fight followed, both men firing at each other while their horses were on the gallop. The Kid's revolver became emptied first and he turned out of the road to seek safety, while Llewellyn never drew rein on his horse until he reached Fort Hartsuff twenty-five miles distant, where he got together a squad of soldiers headed by Happy Jack, a United States scout. They found Hazen still alive. Happy Jack soon located Milton, who surrendered. He was tried and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, but shortened his term a year and a half by good behavior. When he got out of prison he declared he was tired of the kind of life he had been leading and promised to settle down as a law-abiding citizen. He kept his promise and was upon several occasions instrumental in assisting to bring criminals to punishment.

Milton is at this time a business man in a neighboring state, is marshal of the town in which he lives and is doing all he can to atone for the exploits in which he took a prominent part in the cowboy days of central Nebraska.

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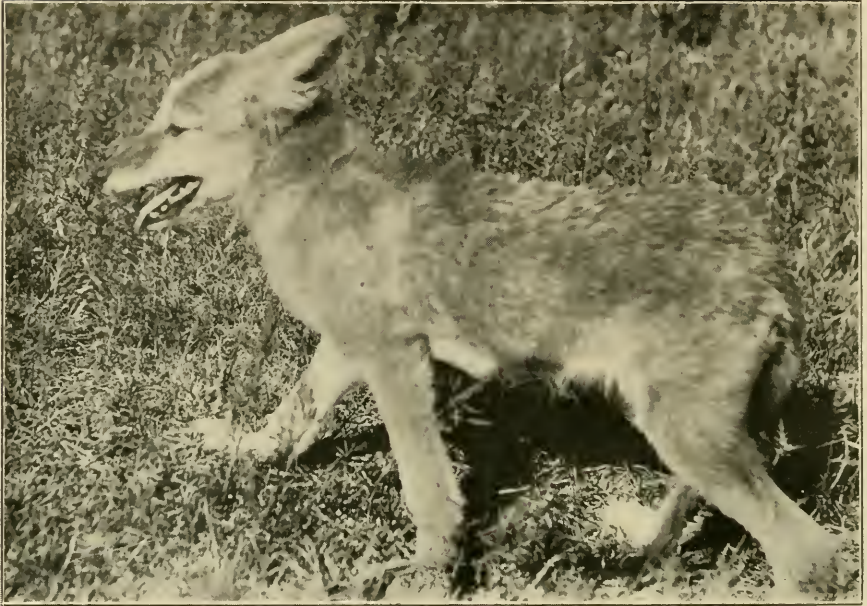
## The Coyote.

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The coyote whose photograph, taken from life, appears here, is one of the natural productions of Custer county, where, on account of his chicken-stealing proclivities, he has been voted a pest and a nuisance.

Perhaps we can not more fittingly conclude our description of the coyote than by reproducing the following extracts from the pen of George B. Mair of





A Howling Success.

the Callaway Courier, which we find in an old file of that paper and which seems to fit the animal pictured above to a dot:

"The coyote is quite a large animal, although some of them are not so much so. They do most of their rustling nights, when honest folks are supposed to be in bed, and attend to their sleeping in the daytime. Once in a while one stays out until after daylight. On such occasions he may be seen making a sneak across the prairie in the direction of his hole, with his tail between his hind legs, looking about to see if he has been discovered, and trying to invent some story to tell his wife when he gets home.

"What he lacks in beauty is more than made up in ugliness. The knowledge that he is no beauty has undoubtedly soured his originally sunny disposition and caused him to shun society and look out of the corners of his eyes.

"The crowning glory of the coyote is his magnificent voice. We have heard the roar of the fierce Numidian lion in his den at Forepaugh's circus and the melodious ya-hoo of the jackass, but we never realized the weird and sublime power of music until we attended a moonlight rehearsal given by a pack of coyotes the first night we struck Custer county.

"But civilization and poisoned meat are getting in their deadly work

among him. Some day the last gray-headed patriarch will sit on the brow of yon beetling cliff, with his form silhouetted against the rising moon, and he will be seen no more.

"And a weatherbeaten pelt hanging onto the end of an old corn crib will be the only remaining relic of a vanished race."

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## Search for the Silver Medal.

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(By S. D. Butcher.)

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"Good morning, colonel; I'm glad you came in, as you may be able to help me solve a mystery, as you are an old resident of Custer county."

"At your service, sir," replied the colonel good-naturedly. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, colonel, the fact is that while Mr. Westbrook was digging a water main near the Globe hotel in Broken Bow a few days ago he dug up from six feet underground a rusty looking object which was circular in form and about twice the size of a silver dollar. Upon cleaning off the rust with which it was incrustated he found that it was a silver medal. Mr. Westbrook has already been offered fifty dollars for it."

"Why, that is surely remarkable. Can any of the characters be discerned on the medal?"

"Yes, indeed; they are remarkably plain and well-preserved to be seventy-five years old. The medal weighs about two ounces and bears on one side this inscription: 'James Adams, President U. S., 1825,' with a picture of the president; on the other side are two clasped hands, one of which has a coat sleeve, showing civilization, while the other is bare, indicating that of the savage, while above the hands is crossed the pipe of peace and the tomahawk with the words: 'Peace and Friendship.' There is a hole bored in the medal at the top which shows to my mind that it has been worn around the neck of some person—presumably a dusky warrior of the plains—and that it had been given by the President as a token of some treaty of peace. But what puzzles me is to account for its being found buried six feet under the ground in Broken Bow. What is your theory, colonel?"

The colonel's eyes sparkled with their old-time fire as he answered: "Well, Mr. Historian, for once you may consider yourself a lucky man, as I believe I can solve the mystery."



Sioux Warrior on Guard.

### THE COLONEL'S STORY.

While camped on Wood river during the '60s, hunting buffalo and stalking elk, I became acquainted with a very genial and intelligent Irishman by the name of Mike O'Rafferty. Mike was a grand specimen of the hardy frontiersman. He stood fully six feet two in his stocking feet, long dark locks flowing down over his shoulders, large, honest blue eyes that always sparkled with fun and good humor, a happy-go-lucky sort of fellow that always took the world in a general sort of way. He was withal a great gossip and possessed of a very inquisitive temperament which often led him into trouble, out of which, however, he always managed to extricate himself in such an innocent and smooth way that one could hardly tell whether the mistake was not premeditated.

It was late in the fall and I had been having splendid success for the short time I had been at this place. So far I had seen no hostile Indians, but ugly rumors had reached my ears of a large band of Sioux warriors having been seen some twenty-five or thirty miles further north, near Muddy creek,

between the South and Middle Loup rivers. Report said they had on their war paint and that they seemed to be heading for the north side of the Muddy valley to a point where from some high bluffs columns of smoke could be seen



Uncle Swaim and Aunt Sarah on their Fish Pond. Aunt Sarah has just caught a fine fish. Uncle Swaim seems not to be so successful, maybe on account of the kind of bait he uses, which can be seen in his end of the boat.

ascending. Now, if this were true, every precaution must be taken not to be discovered, for the Sioux in peace and the Sioux in war are two entirely different propositions. Since the day before I had built no fire and was anxiously awaiting the return of Mike who had gone north about a week before. I knew he was cautious as he was brave, and would take care of himself unless he were ambushed. Al Burger, alias Dick Seymour, or Bloody Dick, as he was sometimes called, and his brother, stayed with me all night and confirmed the rumor. These young fellows were buffalo hunters and trappers and were on their way to North Platte with furs. (I met Bloody Dick a few days ago and he tells me that he has married and has been living on the Middle Loup since 1882.)

Our camp was in a deep ravine or dry gorge covered completely over with a dense growth of timber or underbrush, and amply hidden from sight of any



prowling savages that might pass up or down the valley, unless they stumbled upon us by accident. The day wore along and Mike failed to put in an appearance; the sun sunk into the western horizon in a halo of glory and the night came on apace. The little screech owl quavered out his mournful and sleepy notes as if he were cold. They had hardly died away in the night air before a sharp, plaintive wail was heard, like a human being in distress, which gradually rose higher and higher until it became a shriek which then grew fainter and fainter until it seemed a mile away. Then suddenly the stillness was broken by its mate answering from an adjoining tree. These bobcats had scented blood and were figuring on making a meal from the saddles of a fine black-tailed deer which I had killed the day before and hung up temptingly on a limb just out of their reach. The darkness was so intense that it could almost be felt, and I did not retire until long after midnight. As I sat in the solitude of my surroundings every faculty of hearing was at constant strain to catch the first footfalls of old High-Knocker, Mike's old sorrel horse, of whom the owner was as proud as a girl of her first beau. And justly so, for he was a fine specimen of horse flesh, a thoroughbred racer, and could easily distance any pony the Indians possessed, and had often carried Mike out of danger when he was hard pressed by the red devils.

The moon arose clear about 10 o'clock, but still Mike did not appear, and no sound could be heard but the sharp and angry bark of a pack of coyotes as they fought over the carcass of a horse which had belonged to a freighting outfit pushing through to the Black Hills. Finally becoming tired of watching and waiting I retired to my dugout, or cache, in the bank, rolled myself up in my blanket and passed the remainder of the night in fitful slumber, filled with horrid dreams wherein was mixed the little screech owl with his great eyes, and the bobcat glaring at me from his tree with balls of fire, while Mike had been killed by the bloody savages and I was on old High-Knocker flying for my life with the Indians in full pursuit. I was awakened by a slight crackling noise near me and I started to my feet grasping my trusty rifle. I saw Mike standing in the door of our rude little hut with a look of grave importance on his face. I glanced out past him and discerned the sun shining brightly and old High-Knocker standing in the bottom of the gorge with drooping head and foam-flecked sides, showing plainly that he had been ridden long and hard. I pulled myself together and said: "Good morning, Mike; you look like you had seen the ghost of your grandmother; speak up, man; what's the news?"

"Och, sor, news is it? Sure an' there's news enough. The rid divils is all stured up for sure this toime, an' it's not the loikes of me that's goin' to be

sthoopin' round here much longer an' have me top knot raised be some thafe wid a tommyhawk."

"Well, Mike, tell me about it."

"Well, ye see, sor, I had rached the Muddy valley, and found the shmall strame they call a creek and picked me out a campin' place near a big hill where I could see—"

"But, Mike, what about the Indians?"

"Aisy, now, colonel; I'm gettin' to that. I had found baiver signs and was procadin' to—"

"Yes, Mike, but tell me about what you saw."

"Beg your pardon, colonel. As I was sayin', I looked up the valley and thin I looked down the valley, an' I says to mesilf says I, 'here's the foinest valley in Nebraska for farmin', an' '—"

"For heaven's sake, man, don't be so garrulous, but tell me about the Indians if you saw any."

"Saw any, did ye say? Now wouldn't that kill yez. Do you suppose I'd have ridden ould High-Knocker loike that just for the fun of the thing? As I was sayin', I looked acrass the valley an' I saw a sight that made me hair push me hat aff me head, so I did. I saw three big pillars of shmoke arisin' out of the bluffs on the other side. Sez I to mesilf, sez i, that ould spalpeen, Crow Dog, is up to some of his devilmint. An' as it was near sundown I sez to mesilf, sez I, I'll see phwat the ould haythen is up to. I gave High-Knocker some grain I had in a sack and ate some baiver tail and could potaties, not wishing to make a fire. I waited till darkness surrounded the horizon, knowing that the moon didn't rise till—"

"For goodness sake, Mike, come to the point and tell us what you know."

"Well, sor, that is just phwat I am procadin' to do as fast as I can."

"Mike, if you ever want to ask a girl to marry you, and you are as long in getting to the popping point as you are in telling what you saw on this trip, the girl would probably go to sleep and miss the half of what you said and never know how near she came to becoming Mrs. O'Rafferty."

"I see ye're pokin' fun at mé now, colonel. As I was sayin', there would be no moon till tin o'clock, so, tightening the cinches on ould High-Knocker, lookin' to see that me revolvers was handy, an' takin' me directions be the north star, cautiously—"

"Look here, Mike, you are drawing on your imagination for the north star, for it was so dark last night that it couldn't be seen ten feet."

"That's throe, sor, but I located the north star before sundown—in fact, early in avenin'—and I thin followed the direction. Foinally I shmelled shmoke and by follyin' the scint I came to the fut of the bluffs, hobbled ould



Powell Canon near Arnold, where some years ago a hunter and trapper lost his way and was frozen to death, his body not being found until the following spring.



High-Knocker, thin cautiously worked me way toward the shmoke which came down from the other side av the bluffs. Whin I rached the top and looked over it chilled the blood in me veins, so it did. But I sez to mesilf, sez I, 'Mike O'Rafferty, sure ye are no coward, an' this is not the first tight place ye've been in wid the rid spalpeens, an' ye've come here to find out phwat that ould Crow Dog is up to, and yondher he sits be that big camp fire, wid 500 haythens seated in a circle if there's fifty. He is holdin' a council of some kind an' ye must hear phwat he says.' So maneuverin' to take advantage of the inimy's position, as our captain used to say, I shlipid along in the darkness to within a few fate of Crow Dog, and where it would have been very awkward to have explained me business to the ould haythen without lyin' about it if a sthray dog had shmelled me out. Whin Crow Dog rose to his fate and waved his hand, I could hear the batin' of me own heart, and the war paint shmeared on the faces of the rid divils flashed in the fire till they looked like painted fiends."

The colonel stopped, lit his pipe and continued: "Here is the substance of Mike's story, when put in English:

Crow Dog spoke as follows: "My brothers, the heart of Crow Dog is heavy to-night, and he feels that the greatness of the Sioux nation is fast passing away. For many moons we have been badly beaten by our mortal enemies, the Pawnees. Crow Dog sees his warriors fall like blades of grass before the prairie fire, and our foes are fast gaining possession of our hunting ground, where our fathers for ages trapped the beaver along the beautiful streams and chased the elk, the deer and the buffalo across the grassy plains. But all of this has changed and Crow Dog has found a cause for the change. He has called his warriors together with the talking smoke. You have obeyed and it is well. A very great evil has befallen us. You know our great paleface father at Washington gave our father's father, Eagle Claws, a silver medal with the picture of the great father on one side. On the other side was the hand of the pale face father clasping the hand of Eagle Claws. Above this the pipe of peace and the towahawk, and the words, Peace and Friendship. This medal was always worn by Eagle Claws, suspended by a thong of deer-skin around his neck. While he wore it he was successful in the chase and conquered all his foes. When he went to the happy hunting grounds he gave this token from the great father at Washington to his son, my father, Rolling Thunder, who was always victorious in battle, and who, when he went to join the Great Spirit, gave it to his son, Crow Dog, saying: 'Keep this, Crow Dog, and wear it next your heart, and you shall have many scalps of the Pawnees to wear at your belt. But beware the day you lose this token.' You have heard that many moons ago, over there to the southwest, on the banks of





Custer County's Best Crop.

the Muddy water, where stood the lodges of our nation, a bloody battle was fought where Crow Dog met Stalking Elk, his Pawnee foe, in a death struggle. Crow Dog came out victorious, but he lost the silver medal. His spirit is broken. He is like a sick squaw. He has no spirit for the chase or for battles unless the medal can be found. Now, O, my warriors, Crow Dog has spoken, and to-morrow at the rising of the sun we will search the ground where once stood our lodges and the great battle field for the silver medal, and I will give fifty ponies and my daughter, Laughing Brook, for a wife, to the warrior that finds the token. Go to your tents, O, my brothers, and to-morrow we will make diligent search. Then sharpen your scalping knives and prepare for the war-path, as our Pawnee foes are camped a day's ride to the southeast killing our game. Their village is strongly guarded, but we will use cunning to outwit them. We will drive a herd of buffalo out on the valley below their village, and while their young men are chasing our game we will crawl up through the grass and scalp and kill their old men and squaws."

"So, sor, afther hearin' this spache by the ould haythen I says to mesilf, sez I, Mike O'Rafferty, its high toime ye was sthrikin' camp and making thracks for home. So here Oi am."

## An Old Settler's Story.

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In writing these reminiscences I hesitate, thinking that perhaps they might as well remain unwritten, but upon reflection I have concluded that to remain silent would not be doing justice to posterity, to whom, perhaps, every circumstance that occurred in the early settlement of Custer county may be



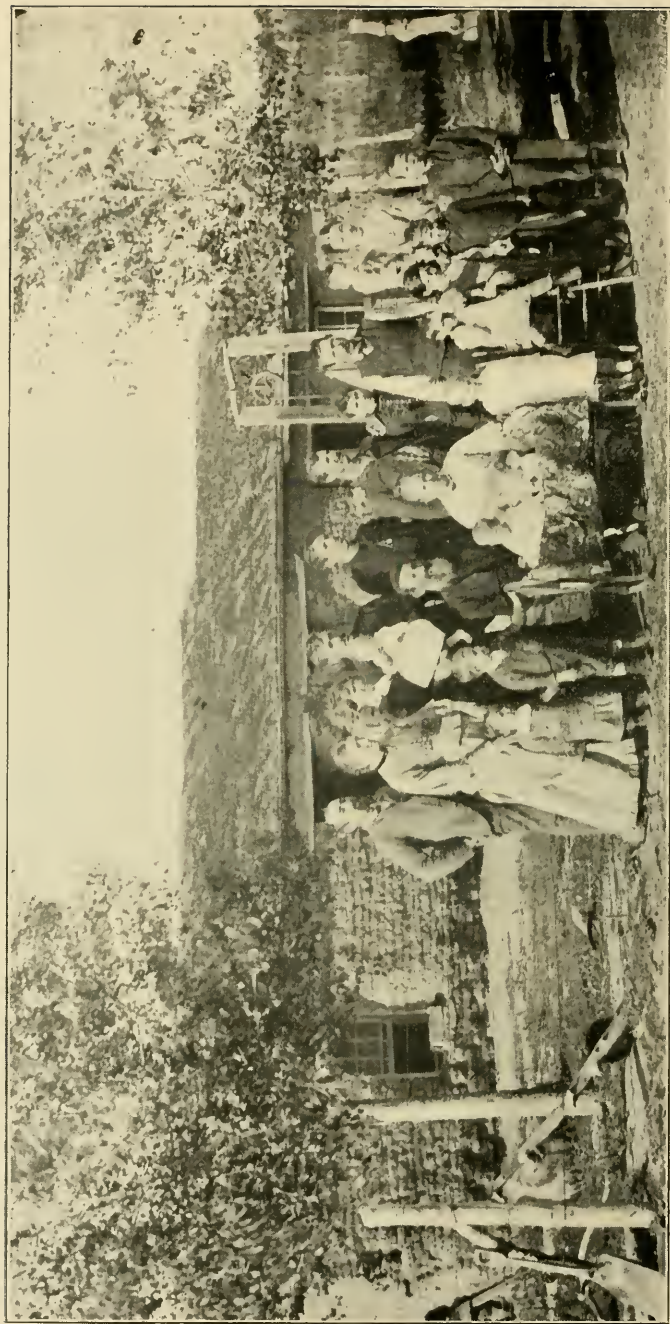
T. J. BUTCHER, Gates, Neb.



MRS. T. J. BUTCHER.

valuable. This pioneer history is made up largely of the personal experiences of those who blazed the way into the wilderness and endured the trials and hardships incident to a pioneer settlement. Being one of these pioneers, although less prominent than many others who have recounted their experiences in this work, I feel that it is my duty to contribute my mite to the general store of facts of which this work is composed.

The writer was born at Burton, Wehetzel county, West Virginia, January 24, 1856, from which place my parents removed to LaSalle county, Illinois, in the spring of 1860, where my father, T. J. Butcher, accepted a position with the Illinois Central railway to pump water, a position he held for almost twenty-one years, resigning to immigrate to Nebraska.



T. J. Butcher, Children and Grandchildren, 1886.



I learned the photograph business in 1874, but was taking a vacation and was engaged in traveling for a firm at Clyde, Ohio. I received a letter from my father stating that he had sold out and was going to move to Custer county, Nebraska. I was very much surprised, and, while in a good position, I was beginning to tire of traveling about from place to place and had already thought seriously of seeking my fortune in the great west.

March 9, 1880, saw two covered wagons slowly wending their way westward from Lostant, Illinois, with 700 long miles ahead of them. These prairie schooners contained T. J. Butcher, G. W. Butcher, his second son, J. R. Wabel, his son-in-law, and the writer. We would travel as long as daylight lasted, then prepare supper and roll up in our blankets to get what sleep we could before daylight the next morning. I was unanimously elected cook (as I was popularly supposed to be good for nothing else), the ague which still clung to me not exempting me from work. My father was always an early riser, and every morning about half past 3 or 4 o'clock would call me up to get breakfast, with the mercury sometimes near zero, and my feelings often from ten to twenty below. Here was roughing it with a vengeance for a tenderfoot who had not done a hard day's work for twelve years, and who had never slept for one night out of doors before undertaking this trip. By the time we reached the Mississippi river my ague had disappeared and when we got as far as Nebraska I had an appetite that made a crust of dry bread taste like a plum pudding.

We arrived at T. W. Dean's place, two and one-half miles west of West Union, in the Middle Loup valley, Custer county, Nebraska, just seven weeks from the time we started. I considered this the finest country I had seen since leaving the East, for a poor man seeking a home. My father located a claim in section 28, township 20, range 20, and put down a well, determined not to remain here if good water could not be obtained. At the depth of twenty feet he procured a bountiful supply of clear, soft water. From this on all was bustle and activity to secure claims and return to the land office at Grand Island, a distance of ninety miles, to file on them. The trip was made in about six days without any serious mishap. My sister met us at Grand Island and I was released from further household cares and duties.

We commenced to settle up the county by digging a hole in the ground and drawing our wagon cover over it, which served as a habitation until our first sod house was completed. The house was 21 by 31 feet in size and it was here that I took my first lessons in sod laying, which resulted principally in wearing out my hands and my patience. I soon came to the conclusion that any man that would leave the luxuries of a boarding house, where they had hash every day, and a salary of \$125 a month to lay Nebraska sod



for 75 cents a day, even if there was a "gentleman" on the top of the wall to do the work, was a fool, and I remained only six weeks. About eight days before the house was completed our provisions gave out. There was nothing to eat except some shorts that we had brought with us to feed the horses. This would not have been so bad had the kerosene can not leaked into the shorts and gave them a flavor that was anything but appetising, but we subsisted on it until we were ready to return to Illinois after the balance of the family.

We left on May 19th, my father and myself, for Illinois, and my brother-in-law for Grand Island to get supplies to last until my father returned with



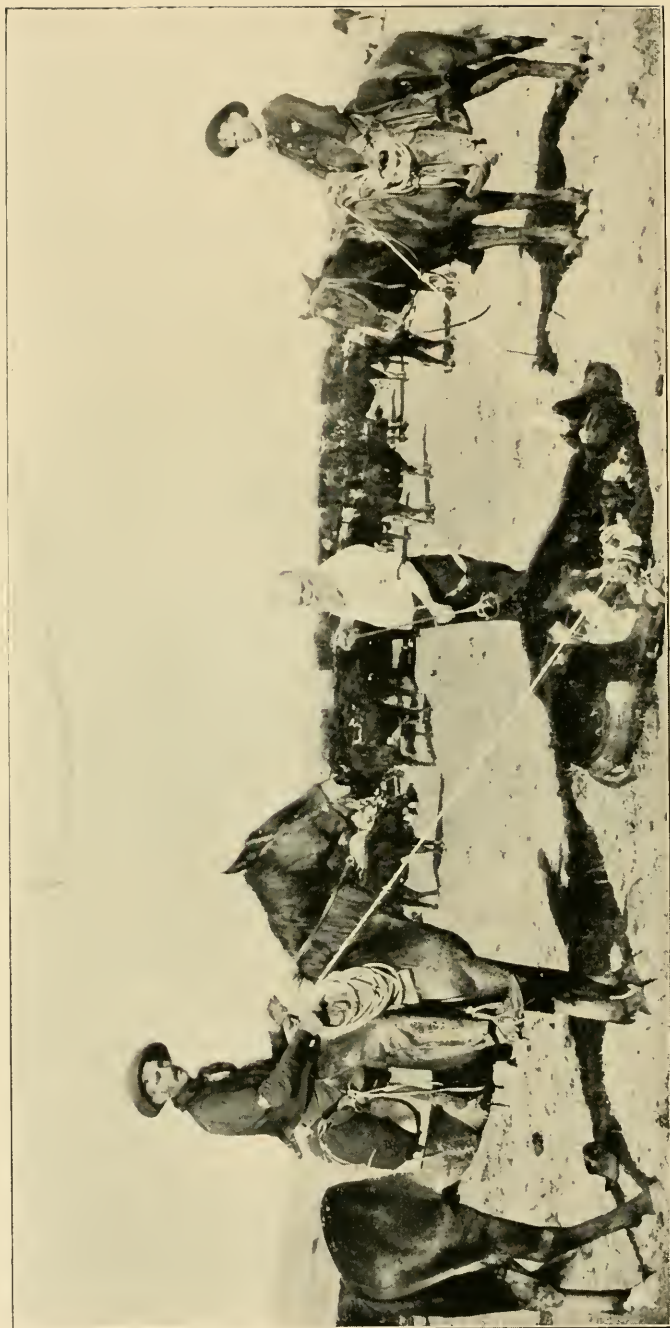
Looking east on Lake Hazel on the farm of S. D. Butcher, the most beautiful set of lakes within 100 miles.

my mother and my youngest brother, Abner, my brother George being left on the claim to break sod and plant sod corn. When about twenty-five miles this side of Grand Island, on our way to Illinois, we stopped for the night and picketed one of our horses—a blind one—and turned the other two loose to graze. About daybreak the next morning we made the discovery that our horses were gone. Wabel and I followed their tracks through the wet grass, supposing they had gone but a short distance. The sun soon came up and dried the grass, but the country being sandy we easily followed their tracks, which were directly towards Grand Island. About noon we struck the house of a settler, where we got breakfast, and were informed that some horses had passed about daybreak. We followed on after them and about the middle of the afternoon saw a man who had tried to catch them, but failed. We

hired him to take us on in pursuit of the runaways, which we finally found tied behind a farmer's wagon just leaving Grand Island. The farmer had caught and advertised them, and was taking them to his place ten miles in the country. He appeared to be as much chagrined at having to give them up as we were pleased to get them back. Some time after we had been gone my father hitched up the blind horse, put on a stay chain, and came to Grand Island, getting there soon after we did. While walking along beside the horse in the opposite track he lagged behind and got his foot caught in the wagon wheel, which crushed some of the bones and crippled him for many weeks.

I will now pass over several months which have no connection with this history and take the reader back to Grand Island at the time of my return from the East to take up my residence on my Custer county claim. The six months' time I had to make good my claim was up except three days, and I had some difficulty in getting a horse to enable me to get to my place in time. But I finally succeeded in procuring an old cow pony that the crows had a mortgage on, with three or four gum boils on his back and sundry other peculiarities to match. Talk about Phil Sheridan's ride! Why, he had only twenty miles to make on a fiery black charger that needed only a slack on the rein to make him fly like the wind, but I had to cover ninety-nine miles on an old crow-bait and build a house within seventy-two hours. I stood it pretty well for twenty miles (the distance that Sheridan rode), when the violent shaking up began to tell on me. Every step he made was likely to kill me. He rode easily enough if I kept on the lope, but whenever he came to a draw or a low place in the road he came down on both legs as if they had been made of two iron bars, while no persuasion of whip or spur could induce him to more than creep until the opposite side of the depression had been reached. And these depressions occurred with painful regularity every fifty or 100 yards. I wished more than once that the claim was more than 2,000 miles away, so that it would be no use in my trying to get there, but as all things have an end, so had my ride. I covered the ninety-nine miles in a day and three-quarters, arriving on my claim nearer dead than alive, but to my surprise the old horse seemed good for another trip.

The next morning my father and two brothers, with the assistance of an ox team and a scraper, helped me to construct a dugout, and my brother Abner and myself slept in it that night. On the following morning we saw some fresh deer tracks within a hundred feet of my dugout, and the same day a man was sent by a kind neighbor (who had been watching it) to jump my claim, but he found the owner with a house up and living on it.



Branding a vicious cow on the Finch Bros. Ranch. The animal is on the prod and has to be securely hog-tied before branding.  
Uncle Swain stands with branding iron in hand ready to perform the branding act.



I had to ride 99 miles on that old crow-bait in 72 hours, build me a house  
and be living on my claim.

### FAREWELL TO MY HOMESTEAD SHANTY.

---

Farewell to my homestead shanty;  
I have my final proof;  
The cattle will hook down the walls,  
And someone will steal off the roof.

Farewell to my sheet iron stove  
That stands in the corner all cold;  
The good things I've baked in the oven  
In language can never be told.

Farewell to my cracker-box cupboard,  
With a gunny sack for a door;  
Farewell to my store of good things  
That I never shall want any more.

Farewell to my little pine bedstead,  
'Tis on thee I slumbered and slept;  
Farewell to the dreams that I dreamt,  
While the fleas all over me crept.

Farewell to my down holstered chair,  
With the bottom sagg'd down to the ground  
Farewell to the socks, shirts and breeches  
That fill it again to the round.



Farewell to my nice little table,  
Where under I've oft put my feet,  
Then chose from the bounty of good things  
The substantial of life for to eat.

Farewell to my sour dough pancakes  
That none but myself could endure;  
If they did not taste good to a stranger  
They were sure the dyspepsia to cure.

Farewell to my tea and my crackers;  
Farewell to my water and soap;  
Farewell to my sorghum and buckwheat;  
Farewell to lallacadope.

I remained in Nebraska this year just two weeks, relinquished my claim back to the government, and went to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I would not have remained and kept batch for five years for the whole of Custer county. I give the young man who has gone through such an ordeal great credit for his endurance. But I had just seen enough of the wild west to unfit me for living contentedly in the East, and after passing the winter of 1881 and the spring of 1882 in the medical college at Minneapolis, Minnesota, I was married May 16, 1882, to Mrs. Lillie M. Hamilton, formerly Miss Lillie M. Barber, and began to lay plans to return to Nebraska. The result was that on October 20th of the same year we arrived at my father's place, where we remained all winter, during which time I taught school in the Predmore district and earned enough money to build a photograph gallery 18 by 28 feet, made as follows: We placed six-inch fencing boards up edgewise every two feet, then lathed them both sides, piled clay up around a post, caught a couple of steers, walked them round and round on the clay, adding water until the mud was mixed to the proper constituency, after which we filled in between the laths, making a wall six inches thick. The building was roofed with sheeting. By this time our money was all gone, and we yet had six windows and a skylight and side light to fill. My wife proposed that we fill them with cotton cloth. We moved in on June 20, 1883, and our cloth windows served admirably for some time. I borrowed some money to get my photographic apparatus together and was soon prepared to take tintypes. The next move was to manufacture a background from an old wagon cover that had several holes gnawed in it by the rats. The back ground was painted and patched, but the paint did not cover up the patches and they showed up plainly in the finished pictures. But necessity is the mother of invention, and we soon devised a simple way of getting around this little difficulty. Finding a couple

of coiled wire bed springs, we fastened them to the ceiling, hung the background on them, set them in motion, which blurred the patches so that they were not visible in the picture. Such an outfit!—dirt floor, cloth windows, an old wagon cover for a background—it made us sick at heart. We often wondered what some of our stylish friends back east would think if they should peep in and see us. They would probably have thought we were crazy—and I sometimes thought myself that I might have been a little hasty in my choice of a home, but there I was, with a wife and a baby boy (he is eighteen years old now, and three inches taller than his father) depending upon me for support. I had petitioned for a postoffice and mail commenced running regularly between Jefferson and West Union, a distance of nine miles, and the records show that we canceled 68 cents worth of stamps the first quarter. I considered myself on the high road to success, besides having the honor of being a federal officeholder, and had to stay at home Sundays to give the people their mail for fear they would petition to have the office moved and thus deprive me of the salary attached to it. I worked on the farm for my father for 50 to 75 cents a day, and whenever anyone wanted a tintype I dropped my hoe and made it, and went back to the field again. In the fall I built a sod addition to our gallery. I hauled the sod one mile, always having to give two days of my own work for one day of a man and team. Until our sod house was finished, whenever there came a storm, we had to vacate the gallery, as everything would be flooded, there being nothing but sheeting on the roof. We have often gotten up at midnight, wrapped a quilt around the baby and started for my father's place with the rain coming down in torrents and the darkness so intense that we could see nothing except for the flashes of lightning. Then came the trials and vexations of the good wife. When the storm was over everything in the house was soaked and had to be taken out in the sunshine to dry before they could be used again. But the kind of weather which played her out the most was a long, drizzling rain, which kept everything wet and uncomfortable for days at a time, when we had to make a tent over the bed to keep the baby dry. At such times I could not work in the field and of course I had to take care of the little fellow while my wife prepared our frugal meals. I remember a favorite song I had to sing to keep him quiet on a rainy day. It was as follows: "Say, old man; why don't you put a roof on your house? When it rains I can't, and when the sun shines I don't need it." Probably about here the chorus is interrupted by my wife remarking: "Don't be a fool." It was hard, but what could I do? It did not rain all the time, and when the sun came out and seemed to smile on us the flowers bloomed with more beauty and all nature seemed to rejoice. Not being of a melancholy disposition I had to rejoice also. I took a timber claim



S. D. BUTCHER.



MRS. S. D. BUTCHER.



MISS MADGE H. BUTCHER.



LYNN J. BUTCHER.

and had some breaking done. Some time after this the town of Walworth was started. I joined the boomers of the new town, which was like the mushrooms that come up in the night. I built a sod house 12 by 14 feet and moved my wife and two babies to the new home. By this time a little girl had come to bless us and to add joy to our hearts. A. W. Darling and myself soon had a frame gallery up on borrowed capital, he furnishing the security and me the experience, and it proved a dear experience to me. I had lived in our new house just six weeks when the buildings of Walworth began to be moved away, some to West Union, two and one-half miles east, and to Sargent, six miles down the river. We sold the gallery and followed the building we had once hoped to own, and rented it for five years. The country was new and people were not overburdened with money, but from this time on we had nothing to complain of for a number of years. My friends advised me to go on my farm and go to work. This was an insinuation that rather nettled me. It seemed to suggest that they thought I was afraid to work. This is a mistake. On the contrary I could lie down and go to sleep alongside of it at any time. But I knew probably as well as they did that there would be work enough for me to do, as I would have to build another sod house and I had just completed one in West Union. I was so unsettled that my chickens almost knew, when they saw me coming, that they were expected to lie down on their backs and have their feet tied.

In the spring of 1886 I conceived the scheme of getting up a history of Custer county. From the time I thought of the plan for seven days and nights it drove sleep from my eyes. I laid out plans and covered sheet after sheet of paper, only to tear them up and consign them to the waste basket. At last, Eureka! Eureka! I had found it. I was so elated that I had lost all desire for rest and had to take morphine to make me sleep. I told my scheme to every one I met. I talked it constantly. I have talked it nearly fifteen years, and if God spares me I intend to keep talking it until Custer county is full of books. And as hundreds are already sold, I think I see in the future a partial realization of my dreams. After fifteen years of such a checkered career as few men have experienced, I have still been able to wrench success from defeat. I laid my plans before my father. I wished to secure his help, as I had no horses nor buggy. He is a very cautious man, and while he was considering my proposition I went home and in two weeks I had engaged seventy-five farm views of the farmers as they came to town. Some called me a fool, others a crank, but I was too much interested in my work to pay any attention to such people.

On June 14, 1886, I made my first picture for the new book. Was seven years in making 1,500 farm views and writing 1,500 biographies, when the



drought period stopped the enterprise for several years. But I had secured a nice little home and was nearly out of debt, and was again about to take up the history scheme where I had dropped it in 1892, when on the morning of March 12, 1899, we saw our home and its contents go up in smoke, with no insurance and all our seven years' work of compiling biographies. But I still had the negatives of farm views and determined to make another effort. How well I have succeeded I will leave the reader to judge after he has read this book to the last page and looked at the last picture, and hope you will always hold in kindly remembrance, your humble servant,

S. D. BUTCHER.

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## The Killing of Two Cowboys at Anselmo.

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On the morning of the 1st of April, 1887, the construction train on the B. & M. railroad pulled out of Linscott eastward bound. Billy and Hugh, who, not being able to wait until they reach Anselmo to commence their fun, are having a lively time in the caboose firing off their revolvers, terrorizing the train crew and passengers and cutting up cowboy antics generally. One of the passengers was L. H. Jewett, now postmaster at Broken Bow, who thought he had gotten into a pretty tough crowd. When Anselmo was reached the two cowboys left the train and lost no time in preparing to give that then lively frontier town a touch of high life a la Wild Bill and Cactus Pete.

One Van Allen, a bootlegger of bad whisky, had warned the citizens of Anselmo that a visit from the cowboys was imminent and thus the people were in a manner prepared for their expected guests. Billy Frischauf, a saloon keeper, came to C. D. Pelham and asked him what he should do. Mr. Pelham advised him to close his saloon, and be it said to the credit of Frischauf, he followed the good counsel of his adviser, and not a drop of whisky was sold in his place during the whole of that fatal day. John Anderson, another saloon keeper, also promised to shut up his place during the stay of the cowboys. Anderson did close his saloon in the morning, but having some business out of town, he turned the keys over to his brother, Frank, who unlocked the door and ran the place wide open all day. Things soon began to assume a lively aspect in the little village, and A. F. McKnight, the man who pumped water for the railroad company, using horse power, brought his team over to the livery stable, saying that he had wired the

company that their locomotives could get no water at Anselmo, as cowboys were painting the town and he did not propose to run the risk of getting shot. The boys were using the pump house as a target.

A noticeable feature of the occasion was that one of the cowboys appeared to be a gentlemanly sort of fellow, and took no active part in the



CHAS. PENN, Ex-Sheriff.

During Mr. Penn's term of office he made twenty-six arrests for murder. He is now Commander at the Soldier's Home at Milford, Neb.

shooting, but apparently tried to keep his companion within bounds. The other, however, crazy with bad whisky, determined to have all the fun he could get out of the spree. One of his antics was to place old tin cans on the tops of hitching posts in the street and then shoot them full of holes, regardless of the danger of passers-by, who had to seek safety by getting behind buildings. When they got tired of this diversion he shot a hole through the stovepipe inside a furniture store, the bullet almost grazing the head of Mr. McDowell, who was managing the business for J. H. Brandebury, the proprietor.

In the meantime some of the citizens had had a conference to discuss the advisability of sending for the sheriff, but they decided to wait a little while, hoping that the rowdies would cool off and behave themselves. The boys went to Anderson's saloon, where Degan, the tougher of the pair, was having a fine time marching around in drunken gyrations and shooting holes in the floor and ceiling, when a bullet from his revolver accidentally penetrated the

toe of a young man by the name of Murray. The report immediately flew about town that the cowboys had shot a man, and the following telegram was immediately dispatched to Broken Bow:

Anselmo, Neb., April 1, 1887.

Sheriff Custer County, Broken Bow, Neb.:

Cowboys are terrorizing the citizens of Anselmo, and one man has been shot through the foot. We ask your protection.

(Signed)

WALTER SCOTT.

C. D. PELHAM.

Charlie Huntington let them have an old dray horse, and another was procured at a livery stable kept by one Bassey. Mounted on these steeds the two rode into Pelham's store, helped themselves to cigars, rode out and across the street to the store of Weander Bros., where they got something else. By this time it was getting along in the afternoon, and the citizens were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the sheriff, who was expected every moment. After visiting all the stores in town, Fitzpatrick and Degan returned to the saloon, where they attempted the novel feat of playing a game of pool on horseback, Degan firing off his gun occasionally to emphasize his points. It was in the midst of this diversion that Sheriff Penn and his deputy arrived, pulling up at Pelham's barn. Tom Kimes and Charlie Murray rode out of the barn and Penn, mistaking them for the cowboys, brought his Winchester to his shoulder and commanded them to throw up their hands. Pelham apprised Penn of his mistake, much to the relief of the frightened young men. At this juncture another report from Degan's revolver rang out and Penn inquired: "What shooting is that?" "Cowboys in the saloon," was the reply.

The cowboys were soon given a tip that the sheriff was in town, when they immediately rode out of the saloon into the street, where they got a glimpse of the officer, surrounded by a crowd of citizens, in front of the livery barn. They fired a parting salute from their six-shooters and rode out of town to the northwest. Penn and his men followed them to a house situated on a triangular piece of ground on the outskirts of the village. From this house a road went directly north and another ran parallel with the railroad track in a northwesterly direction. The latter road was taken by the cowboys, who proceeded as far as the hand-car house and then came to a standstill. Penn and his men halted at the dwelling house above referred to, where they waited to see what the boys were going to do. After about fifteen minutes Fitzpatrick and Degan turned the heads of their horses around and slowly approached the sheriff's party. Penn placed his deputy, Jones, and Humphrey Smith, who had volunteered to assist him, at the northeast corner of the house,

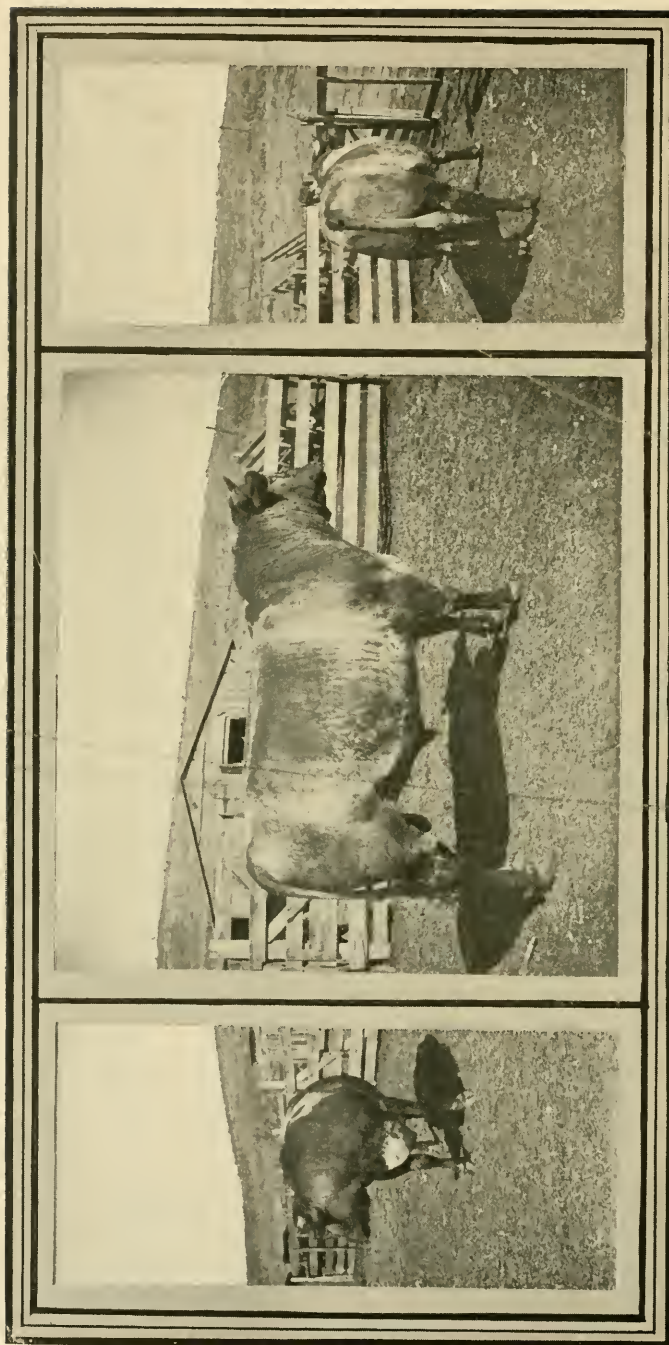
guarding the road from the north, which passed on the east side of the building. He gave them strict orders that in case the cowboys came their way to first demand of them to halt; then, if they did not stop, to shoot their horses; and finally, if they still refused to surrender, to shoot them. Penn took his station near the southeast corner, that being the point to which the boys were apparently approaching. When within a short distance from the house they turned and rode directly east, striking the road running north and south, and were rapidly nearing the deputies. One of the men shouted out: "Here they come!" and Penn rushed over from his corner and commanded: "Throw up your hands; I am the sheriff of Custer county!" The boys paid no attention to the command. Eye witnesses say that the horses were shot first. Fitzpatrick's animal becoming frantic, he held the bridle rein with his left hand and was reaching behind to grasp the saddle to keep from falling off, when Smith, thinking he was reaching for his revolver, fired and shot him through the heart. It was afterwards learned that Fitzpatrick was unarmed, having thrown his revolver away before he rode back to town, possibly thinking that in case he was arrested it would go easier with him if it was found that he did not carry a weapon. Degan's horse was also shot, and refusing to surrender, the rider then and there met the same fate at the hands of Penn. An inquest was held and a verdict returned to the effect that the two cowboys had been killed while resisting arrest at the hands of officers of the law.

The victims of this lamentable tragedy had no one to blame but themselves for their undoing. They were not at heart vicious boys, but the wild life they led on the range had made them reckless and foolhardy, and in accordance with the cowboy ethics of that period they considered the holding up of a town a species of innocent pastime. Anselmo had been quite a favorite resort for these rowdies from the range, whose periodical visits always resulted in trouble. The citizens, therefore, who furnished them with liquor, were partly to blame for the consequences of an injudicious mixture of bad whisky and rowdyism.

NOTE—By Author. Space will not allow us to enter more fully into this matter, and the above facts were obtained from affidavits and citizens who were on the ground at the time.







Three Views of the Show and Breeding Bull Thickset 152924.

M. E. VANDENBERG, P. O. SARGENT, NEB.

M. E. Vandenberg came to Custer County in the spring of 1878, and established a cattle ranch on the Middle Loup river, three miles southeast of the present site of Sargent. In 1889 he made his first purchase of Short horns, buying four cows of the Gwynne Princess and Young Mary families, and the Crutchshak bull. In 1890 he purchased the Golden Drop bull, Golden Prince 108088 was purchased of Col. W. A. Harris. At Isaac Johnson's closing out sale in 1893, the show cows, Lady Gwynne and Mazurka Lass, were added to the herd. Lady Gwynne, as a two-year-old, was second at Red Oak, first at Corning, second at Lincoln, and first at Kansas City in 1891. In 1892 Lady Gwynne was third and Mazurka Lass second at the Nebraska State Fair.

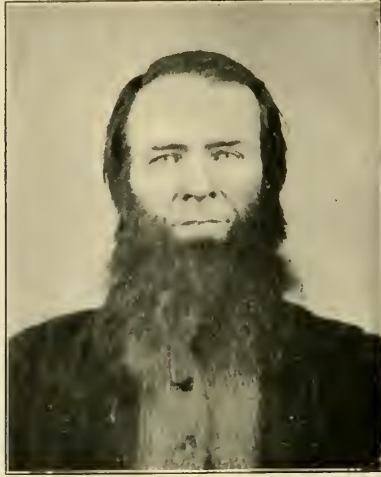


Mazurka Douglas.

Mazurka Douglas 3d.

Mazurka Douglas 2d.

Mazurka Lass was best aged cow sold at Johnson's closing out sale, and has left a valuable progeny for Mr. Vandenberg, no less than eleven of her female descendants being in his herd at the present time. The last addition to the herd is the heifer Mina Abbottsburn, out of the show cow Lady Barrington, and sired by Young Abbottsburn 2d; and the show and breeding bull Thicket 152921, sired by the great show bull Abbottsburn 2d, dam Fairy Queen by Lavender Queen 3d. Thicket has certainly been well named, as he is undoubtedly one of the thickest, biggest around, heaviest bodied bulls on short legs to be found anywhere, and coming from such a family of milkers, is one of the most valuable young bulls now in use for anyone seeking the production of practical, rent-paying cattle. Taking it all in all this herd compares favorably with the best in the state.  
[Editor:—Anyone desiring to introduce new blood into their herd cannot do better than see or write Mr. Vandenberg. Ranch, three miles southeast of Sargent, Neb.]



JOSEPH Y. PROVINCE

Was born in Fayette county, Pennsylvania, July 18, 1825, and was married in 1848, in Marion county, West Virginia, to Permelia J. Stevens, who was born at Green, Pennsylvania, December 3, 1829. Mr. Province was the father of thirteen children, John H., Margaret A., Angeline, Jasper S., Celia J., Martha E., Newton G., Louisa, Nathan S., Samuel U., Philip S., Selina and Jessie P.

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## The Province Tragedy.

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Early in the spring of 1885, if we had traveled down Spring creek, which empties into the South Loup river some six miles below the present site of Callaway, we would have seen on the north side of the river an immigrant camp, the foundation laid for a new sod house, and an old man and his several sons busily engaged in finishing their habitation. They were building their house near a large draw, which led to the river near by. This claim was inside the Brighton ranch inclosure, and had previously been taken by another man, but the law had not been complied with, and at this time old man Province appears to be the only man in Nebraska who desires this particular piece of land. Visiting the same place three days later, we find the Province building completed and lumber on the ground for another house a short distance away.



One of the boys came in and said: "Dad, we are to have a new neighbor, who is starting to build over yonder, and if I can see straight he's building awful close to our line. In fact I think he must have made a mistake and is several rods over on our land." "O, no, boy; I reckon not, and I am glad we are going to have neighbors." "So am I, dad, but you'll find I am right. Here he comes now, we will find out who he is, and as he has done no work yet, if he is wrong he will not be put out much by the mistake."

"Good morning, sir; I see we are going to have some neighbors, and right glad I am to welcome you. But one of the boys was just telling me he thinks you have made a mistake and are building on our claim. Bein' a stranger, such things can very easily happen, and one of the boys or I can show you the corner so as to be sure.

"Well, old man, I think you are mistaken, and you have built on my claim, as I have papers on this claim and am going to build on it, so you can vacate as soon as you please."

"So have I, Mr.—what might your name be?"

"Long, sir."

"Well, Mr. Long, I went to the land office and found a pre-emption had been filed on this claim, and knowing the law had not been fulfilled, I filed homestead papers on it and I am living here."

"Well, sir, I have the relinquishment papers of the man who had a pre-emption on this claim, and I intend to stay."

"All right, Mr. Long; we will let the courts settle to whom the claim belongs."

This man Long was a single man and an employe of the Brighton Ranch Company. The feud thus started between the rival claimants to this land ended later in the killing of old man Province.

It will be remembered that the land within this immense pasture, comprising some fifteen square miles of territory, was government land subject to entry by homesteaders, and was simply appropriated by the cattle men without warrant of law. As soon as settlers began to file on claims within its fence the ranch company had as many of its employes as possible file on claims in order to retain for its use the claims thus taken. Long is said to have been one of these employes, and from this time on constant quarrels occurred between him and Province, pending the decision of the land office as to the rightful owner of the claim. There were charges and counter charges. At one time, we believe, the ranch company had the Province boys, George Sickler and John McDermott, arrested on a charge of cattle stealing. John McDermott demanded a separate trial, and the company proved that he helped to kill a 1,600-pound beef and carried one hind quarter two miles in



a two-bushel sack. John S. Kirkpatrick (now a member of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission), then a young man just starting in business in Custer county, had John's case in hand. He took advantage of this evidence, made an eloquent plea, showing that his client was a man who weighed but 110 pounds, yet had been charged with carrying one-quarter of a 1,600-pound beef two miles in a two-bushel sack. The jury was out about fifteen minutes, and it is said they agreed among themselves that they believed the prisoner was not guilty, but if he had done as the testimony said he did, Mac had earned the beef. The cases against the Province boys and Sickler never came to trial.

On Thursday morning, April 9, 1885, Mr. Province started to Broken Bow, leaving two sons, aged about twelve and fourteen respectively, to plow. Shortly after the departure of Province, Long appeared where the boys were at work, armed with a Winchester, and ordered them to quit or he would shoot. The boys immediately quit work and started after their father, overtaking him before he arrived at Broken Bow. Mr. Province came on to town and contemplated getting out a warrant, but being advised not to do so, returned home during the evening. The next morning he went out and commenced plowing where the boys had left off. A few hours later John McDermott came galloping into Broken Bow with the news that Mr. Province had been shot down by Stephen Long or Charles Powell. Dr. Daum immediately started for the scene of the tragedy and found that Province was dead.

On Saturday morning Dr. Hull, county coroner, summoned a jury, and in company with a large number of citizens of Broken Bow and the surrounding country, visited the place where the murder had been committed, where all the testimony available was taken. The first witness examined was Maria Powell, wife of Charles Powell, who lived in the house with Long. In her testimony Mrs. Powell said that she was in the house when the shooting occurred; Mr. Powell and Mr. Long had gone out of the house; Mr. Long had a Winchester and Mr. Powell a needle gun; did not see the men when the shooting commenced, and did not see outside until after Mr. Province was shot; heard Province call for Mr. Long to come on, he was ready for him. She thought Province had fired five shots, Long two and her man the last shot. When the shooting was over she saw Long and Powell in the dooryard, and Mrs. Province coming down to where her husband was lying. I asked Mr. Long: "Did you hit him? He said: 'I guess I did, for he fell.'" The men staid about the house until after dinner and then went down to Allyn's lower ranch.

Philip S. Province, a son of the deceased, said he was plowing with his father; that Steve Long and Charley Powell came out of the house and shot

two or three times, and that his father then shot at them several times with a revolver. The men were about seventy-five yards distant when the firing commenced, and he was sure his father did not commence shooting first. After they had fired several shots he saw Long behind a wagon and Powell on the west side of the house. They kept on firing and then Province fired several shots at them with his revolver, and also with a shotgun which he had with him. He then started for the house and had gone about twenty feet when he fell. The shooting took place about 8 o'clock in the morning.

Joseph Y. Province, supposed to be on his death bed, but in sound mind and memory, doth depose and say:

Stephen D. Long, and, I think, the man living in the house with said Long, on the 10th day of April, 1885, about 8 o'clock in the morning, came out and commenced shooting at me, with repeating rifles, as near as I could make out. I shot back at them. I was in my field plowing, about fifty yards from said Long's house, when the firing commenced. After they had shot once or twice I shot back. I shot five times, one with a single barrel shot gun and balance with a revolver. Buck shot No. 3 was in the shot gun. They shot a dozen or more shots. After I had shot all in my weapons, as I thought, I called to them to stop shooting; I would give up; but they kept on shooting until one of them hit me. I do not know which one hit me. When said Long came out I said: "Now draw your revolver on me if you want to." I was on my way to my house when I was shot. I was about 100 yards from said Long's house when I was shot.

JOSEPH Y. PROVINCE.

(His (X) Mark.)

Witness to his mark, Jasper Newlan.

Sworn and subscribed to before me, in the town of Custer, county of Custer, and state of Nebraska, this 10th day of April, A. D. 1885.

BENJAMIN L. BRISBANE,

Town Clerk for the Town of Custer.

The following verdict was returned by the coroner's jury:

STATE OF NEBRASKA,

Custer County.

At an inquisition held at the late residence of Joseph Y. Province, in Custer county, Nebraska, on the 11th day of April, 1885, before Wyman Hull, coroner of said county, upon the body of Joseph Y. Province, lying dead, by its jurors, whose names are hereunto subscribed, the said jurors, upon their oaths, do say that the deceased came to his death by means of a gunshot wound, inflicted by a bullet discharged from a gun in the hands of one Stephen Long or one Charles Powell, whom the jury find made a felonious

assault upon the said deceased, on the morning of April 10, 1885, with repeating rifles, each of said parties firing several shots at deceased, one of which shots struck and produced the death of said Joseph Y. Province.

I. T. MERCHANT, Foreman,  
A. W. GANDY,  
M. CONLEY,  
H. A. GRAHAM,  
C. J. ELLIOTT,  
GEO. CUDEBEC.

Shortly after the shooting Long and Powell hid themselves in the hills. When the sheriff, C. P. Foote, arrived on the spot on Saturday he found about seventy-five armed men there in a state of great excitement, vowing vengeance against the murderers. The sheriff tried to reason with them, but they were not disposed to listen to him. He said they had a perfect right



Old Brighton Ranch.

to be there if they were there to see the law carried out, but if they were there to commit another deed of violence he advised them to disband and go home. This enraged the mob the more and a petition was gotten up on the spot, calling upon the sheriff to resign, which was signed by about fifty persons on the butt of a musket. A messenger came from the murderers that they would give themselves up if they were guaranteed protection against violence at the hands of the citizens. This assurance was given and Long and Powell were arrested and taken before T. B. Buckner, a justice of the peace, where they waived examination. A mittimus was issued and the prisoners taken to the jail at Plum Creek for safe keeping until their trial in the District Court, a

number of citizens having declared that the men would never be tried in Custer county, but that they would be hanged without a trial.

As soon as the sheriff had left with the prisoners, the mob which was left behind, instead of returning to their homes, proceeded down the river to the White House, the headquarters of the Brighton Ranch Company, where lived Virgil Allyn, the foreman. Mr. Allyn was absent at Plum Creek at the time, and the citizens set about sacking and looting the place from cellar to garret, helping themselves to everything in the shape of eatables and drinkables they could lay their hands on. As Allyn was one of the highest livers in the country, it is needless to say that the hungry mob had a feast the like of which few of them had enjoyed since they came to the country. Among his other supplies the foreman had a cask of rare old wine, which he kept for the especial entertainment of the guests at the numerous banquets that were held at the White House. The discovery of this treasure was hailed with a shout by many of the mob, and a goodly number of them began to load up on liquor. At this stage of the proceedings an old gray-headed man, who was among them, realizing the danger of adding intoxication to the already inflamed passions of the men, seized a hatchet and knocked in the head of the cask, letting the contents run out on the ground. This brave act probably saved Custer county from an added blot upon her already blackened record, and the name of Isaac Merchant should be revered for all time to come for his timely interference at this critical time. After having satisfied their appetites, the raiders loaded up all the canned goods and other provisions they could find about the place and carried them to the widow Province, the cooler heads only preventing the others from burning the house before they left. On their way back a log house belonging to the Brighton Ranch Company was burned. The house was of cedar logs and was valued at \$1,000. By this time Allyn had heard, in Plum Creek, of what was going on, and started at once for home to protect his property. Fortunately, before his arrival, the mob dispersed, else there would, in all probability, have been more trouble of a serious nature, as he brought a posse of armed cowboys with him.

The session of the District Court in which Long and Powell were tried convened on Monday, July 6, 1885, with Judge Francis G. Hamer on the bench. A special venire of 120 were summoned to try the case. The empanelling of the jury commenced before noon on Monday and was not completed until 10 o'clock on Tuesday. The following jurors were chosen: L. Sutton, West Union; John K. Cooper, Ortello; S. H. Read, Merna; William Hyatt, Myrtle; C. A. Wetherby and J. Snell, Keota; H. Gage, A. C. Blakeslee, W. H. Henderson, Wood River; H. C. Stuckey, Georgetown; J. L. Oxford, Lillian.

The attorneys for the state were: H. M. Sinclair, district attorney; Aaron





V. ALLYN.

Wall and Thomas Darnell, while the defendants were represented by Attorneys McNamar, Greene and Chapman. After a hard fought legal battle the jury returned the following verdict:

The State of Nebraska  
vs. } ss.  
Stephen Long and Charles Powell, }

We, the jury in this case, being duly empaneled and sworn, do find and say that we find the defendant, Stephen Long, is guilty of manslaughter, as charged in the indictment, and recommend him to the mercy of the court; and we find the defendant, Charles Powell, not guilty.

LOUIS SUTTON, Foreman.

In due time the following sentence was pronounced against Stephen Long by Judge Hamer:

It is therefore considered and adjudged by the court that the said defendant, Stephen Long, be imprisoned and confined in the penitentiary of the state of Nebraska, at hard labor, for the period of four years and six months, and that he pay the costs of this prosecution, and that he stay committed in the hands of the sheriff of Custer county, Nebraska, until the sentence of this court be complied with or he be otherwise legally discharged.

After serving about two years of his time, Long was pardoned out on account of ill health and died in about a month thereafter.

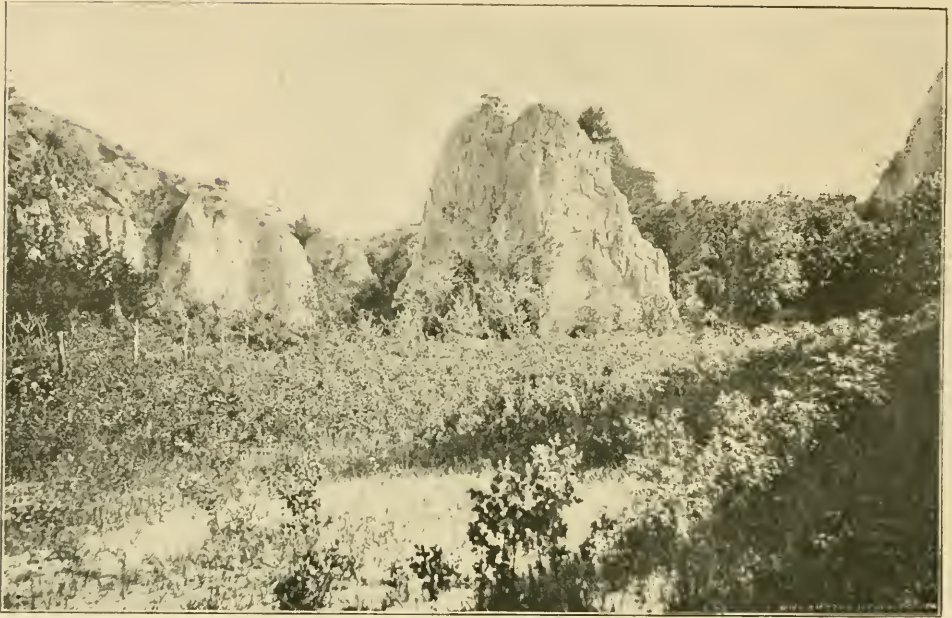
## A Cowboy's Story.

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James Farley.

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James E. Farley, the writer of the following sketch, was born in Platt county, Missouri, February 26, 1850. In the summer of 1878 left Dodge City, in southwestern Kansas, a famous cattle town, bound for Nebraska, over the overland trail via Ogallala and North Platte. Arrived on the Middle Loup river in the fall of the same year, and wintered in Custer county. In the spring of 1879 I returned to Kansas, where I took part in the round-up on the Smoky river, in the employ of Major Wilson, who represented an English firm. Their ranch was located on Hell creek, which empties into Smoky river. I worked up to the head of the Smoky in eastern Colorado, and then across to the Saline river, down the latter stream to north of Buffalo City, where I struck the cow trail to Nebraska. I reached the Dismal river about the 10th of May, in time to strike the northern round-up. We worked from the mouth of the Dismal river to the head. I was then in the employ of Finch-Hatton Brothers, also an English firm. It was my duty to visit all the ranges where cattle were held, look for all cattle belonging to my employers and drive them in. We went north to North & Cody's ranch, and from there into the lake country. On the night of our arrival here I lay down on the prairie, wrapped my blanket around me, and slept as soundly as a babe. The next morning the ground appeared as if it had been disturbed. One of our men named John Daugherty, dug down and found an Indian buried in a sitting posture, his head not a foot under ground. The body was in an advanced state of decay, and the Indian had probably been one of a band of Cheyennes which had passed through the previous fall on their way to Pine Ridge. On this round-up we found a great many unbranded cattle from three to four years old that had probably never before seen a man. These were cattle that had strayed away from the different ranches, and as the country was strange to us, we wondered where they got water, but we found later on that there was plenty of water a short distance west of us. From here we came back to Dave Rankin's ranch, better known as Woods' Stage ranch, on the Black Hills trail from Kearney, twenty-eight miles from the head of the Middle Loup river, and wound up at the Finch-Hatton ranch, where we started. I then quit this outfit and went to Ogallala and hired out to Phil Dufrand, who was foreman of the Cottonwood ranch on the South Loup river, for whom I worked



Owl's Nest in Cheesbrough Canon.

J. Pointer, Artist.

two years. We were near neighbors to the Olives, whose ranch was about four miles down the river. Phil Dufrand was a jolly good fellow. I also became well acquainted, while here, with Marion and I. P. Olive, and found them nice men to get along with. In the spring of 1880 the first round-up commenced in May, at North & Cody's ranch. From there we went to Inman's ranch on the Birdwood; from there to Bratt's ranch at the mouth of the Birdwood, west of North Platte; from there to Plummer's ranch, near Brady island; from there to Fowler's ranch, at the head of the South Loup; from there to John Henry's ranch near the falls of the South Loup; from there to Dan Haskell's ranch; from there to Duffee's ranch on the Cottonwood; from there to Olive's ranch on the South Loup, at the mouth of Spring creek; from there to the Brighton ranch, Virg. Allyn, foreman; and then to several other ranches east of the Black Hills trail, when the round-up broke and we returned home with our cattle.

During my fifteen years' experience as a cowboy, I was with the wildest bunch of cattle ever driven through from the coast. They stampeded every night on the trip, rain or shine. There were 1,500 of them, and we held them for some time on the summer range in southwestern Kansas, on the Little

Arkansas river. We first built a stockade and tried to hold them in that, but they would run round and round and stack up one on top of the other until they broke down the walls and got away. We then herded them on the prairie, six cowboys taking turns of two hours each during the night, two standing guard at once, and whenever a stampede commenced all hands had to turn out, often riding all night through a driving storm of rain, with the lightning making the heavens a continuous blaze and the thunder crashing like a continuous bombardment, frightening the cattle until they were almost frantic. Often at daybreak we would find ourselves twenty miles away from the camp.

Cattle generally follow some leader, stringing out in single file, and they will follow the leader as long as he runs. If we were able to keep up with the leader or head him off we could get the cattle to going in a circle, and after a while to bunch them and get them stopped. Sometimes we were not able to get ahead of the cattle in a stampede, but had to follow alongside, catching glimpses of them when the lightning flashed, strung out a long distance ahead of us. Many of these cattle were five or six years old, and had never been near a man since they were branded, and were as wild as a herd of buffalo. When we started out with them the first week they were on the constant lookout to get away. After succeeding a few times, some of them became spoiled to such an extent that they had to be killed to keep them from demoralizing the rest of the herd. One time there were two cow camps of us holding cattle on the head of Cow creek. Jim Dalzell, a lone settler, had a fine watermelon patch and he told the cowboys that they could have all the melons they wanted, but some of the boys in the other camp thought it would be so much nicer to steal them, and our camp, in connection with one of their men, put up a job on them that caused all of us to have three weeks' extra work. We found out the time set by the boys of the other camp to make a raid on the melons, and stationed our men in the patch to welcome them when they entered. They soon made their appearance, tied their horses, and came over into the patch, Billy Kessler, the man in the plot, leading them right up to where we were hidden in a bunch of weeds. We had taken the balls out of our cartridges to prevent any accident in the darkness. "Come over this way, boys; here's some fine ones," shouted Billy, as he led them towards us. We could hear them scrambling through the melon vines, thumping the melons as they came. When within a few feet of us, we sprang out with a yell and "bang, bang, bang," went the revolvers. Billy bravely held his ground, returning our fire, but the other boys took to their heels, dashed through the creek, with us after them, and firing at every jump. In their fright they rushed through both herds of cattle. The cattle stampeded and



scampered away over the prairie and it took us three weeks to get them together again after this adventure.

We came in contact with nearly every Indian tribe between Red river in northern Texas, and the Dakotas, and saw many thrilling buffalo hunts by the Osages. They would kill the buffalo by riding single file, each man



Has Scented Danger.

carrying a spear, which was aimed at some vital spot. If he missed, another Indian took his place, until the buffalo was down, the squaws following, skinning and securing the meat and the hides.

Towards the end of my cowboy career I worked for the Bar-7 ranch, of which David Rankin was principal owner. This ranch was located on the Middle Loup.

Large herds of elk roamed over this country at that time. While on the round-up in 1881 we sighted a large bunch which had winded us. The boys off with their ropes and after them. C. W. Stern, John Carney, Bert Wilder, Charley Peterson, a green hand at the cattle business, and six or eight others were in the chase and there was enacted one of the most thrilling incidents ever witnessed on the plains of Nebraska. Peterson singled out the biggest

buck in the bunch, and as soon as Charley began to press him hard, he left the bunch and ran in another direction, Peterson close at his heels. I knew that Charley would never let up until he had secured the buck, and I knew full as well that he would have trouble when he threw his rope over the powerful beast, as he never carried a gun. I followed him as fast as my horse could carry me. I lost sight of him for a while in the chop hills, but soon discovered him again as I rode up on a little hill. He had the elk at the end of his rope about eighty rods from me. The first move I saw was the elk making a run on the rope, and when he came to the end of it he fell heavily to the ground. He then jumped up and charged Peterson's horse. As he came on, head down, at the rate of about fifty miles an hour, Charlie spurred his horse to one side and let the elk pass, and gave him another tumble as the rope tightened up. I waited to see no more but galloped as fast as my horse could carry me to his assistance, as I knew that it was only a question of time when the infuriated brute would catch the fearless boy in one of his charges. As I rode up the elk was making his third charge, but Peterson evaded him again and gave him another tumble at the end of the rope. When about three hundred feet from Peterson the elk had again regained his feet, lowered his head for another charge, his eyes flashing fire, and with terrific bounds made for the plucky boy. It seemed to me that it would be impossible for him to get out of the way of those terrible horns. But again he let the elk pass by without touching him and again he brought the brute to the ground at the end of the rope, pulling him square over on his back. Quick as lightning Peterson reined his horse backward, tightened the rope, jumped out of the saddle, whipped out a big jack knife, and slashed it across the throat of the prostrate beast. I shouted to him with all my might to desist, as I expected to see him killed every second, but he heard nothing and saw nothing but that elk, and before I came up Peterson was back in his saddle. "What the devil did you do that for?" I shouted, as soon as I reached him. "I did na want loosse ma rope—da boys da laugh at ma." The other boys followed the bunch and C. N. Stern succeeded in roping two of them at one throw, but one of them got away. None of the boys that saw the sport will ever forget it.

Once seventy-five men started from Raymond lake, fifteen miles west of the head of Middle Loup, river to go to the Newman ranch on the Running Water. We were driving fifteen hundred head of cattle for the northern ranches. We missed our course and traveled for two days in a circle among the sand hills. We neither had water for horses or cattle, and on the third day the poor brutes became frantic with thirst. It took the utmost efforts of the men to keep them from breaking away, and their bellowing was something absolutely heartrending. Men could be seen on every hill around us trying to

see if water could be discovered. At last I saw two men standing on a hill some distance off motioning in such a way that I knew they had found something. I rode up to them and found the nicest little lake of pure water I have ever seen among the sand hills. We all filled our kegs before letting the cattle into the water. After the rejoicing at our find had somewhat subsided we discovered that we were within half a mile of the place from which we had started three days before. We had a good compass, but all the men had declared the compass was no good. Stern had told them of an old trail which led to the Running Water, and they expected to follow that, but it was so dim they crossed it without noticing it, and kept traveling in a circle for three days. After a good breakfast and all the water we could drink, John Darr, two other cowboys and myself, were sent out to find the old trail, which we soon did, and led the party out of the wilderness, reaching our destination safely in due time.

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## Playing Dick Milton.

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Billy Smith, the new cook at Olive's ranch—a "tenderfoot" from the East—stands with mouth wide open, with a huge piece of beef poised on a fork, preparatory to frying it for dinner for a hungry lot of cowboys who have just come in from the range. Some of them are lounging in their bunks, others playing cards, while still others are discussing the probability of Dick Milton being captured by Dick James, sheriff of Dawson county, who is looking for the noted outlaw.

"Say," puts in the cook, "you fellers seem to think Dick Milton is a mighty hard man to catch. Do you know I'd just like to see him once?"

"All right, Billy; I'll give you an introduction to him one of these days," remarked John Finch, one of the youngest cowboys on the ranch, but as full of mischief as a monkey.

"Well, I'd just like to see him."

A few days later the boys were all gone from the ranch except John Finch and the cook, the latter being busy preparing the noonday meal for two. Happening to look out the small window of the log ranch house, John observed Sam Sweely approaching. In an instant the idea of having some fun with the cook occurred to him. Sam was a stranger to Billy, and withal he had some slight resemblance to the outlaw whose acquaintance Billy was

anxious to make. Slipping out of the door, John intercepted Sam and laid his plan before him, and Sam, being somewhat of a wag himself, readily entered into the spirit of the scheme. The couple then entered the house. With a great flourish and show of extreme politeness, John said:

"Mr. Smith, allow me to introduce you to Dick Milton."

Billy's eyes stuck out like two potatoes as he faintly gasped: "I hope I see you."

"Well, young man, have you got dinner about ready? I'm as hungry as a hyena," the meanwhile swaggering about the room making a great display of a couple of huge revolvers dangling at his belt. "Come, hurry up there, and don't be all day about it. D'ye hear?"

"Yes, sir," answered Billy, timidly.

"Say, young man, are ye lookin' fer a job?"

"Yes, sir," replied Billy, rather dubiously. "Mr. Olive is not at home, and I'm cooking until he comes back. Perhaps I can get a job from him."

"Well, sir, I want to hire a good, steady, reliable feller, and I've taken a kinder notion to you. How would fifty dollars a month strike ye, with the chance of a raise as soon as ye get onto yer job?"

"Why—er, I guess that would be all right, but— but—"

"It's a bargain then, and you can commence this evening. I'll go out and see if I can find a horse for ye. Finch, you come out and show me where Olive keeps his saddle horses; I must have one for Smith. I'm a little short on horses just now, myself, but if we have good luck to-night I expect to have some good ones in the morning."

John and Sam started off to find a horse, leaving behind them the worst scared cook in Custer county. He had a good notion to slip out of the door and fly for his life, but he was afraid that the watchful eye of Milton would detect the flight and probably result in his being shot. He concluded to wait for a better opportunity.

Olive had an old pony that had its ears frozen so that one of them lopped forward and the other backward. He weighed about six hundred and fifty, and had the mange so bad that the hair was off in spots as big as a half bushel. In addition to his other infirmities he was lame in three legs, and altogether the sorriest looking pony a man ever saw. Sam threw his lariat over the beast and started to the ranch house with him, Finch skipping on ahead and entering the house. As he entered the door the cook said:

"Say, John, do you know I'm awful sorry I promised Milton I'd work for him. Do you think he would let me back out?"

"I don't know, Billy; he's not a man to be monkeyed with, and I would advise you not to make him mad. You was a big fool to hire out to him; but





Here, Smith, is the best I can do for you now, but tonight we are going to make a fifteen mile dash on a ranch, where, if we come out alive I can get you a popper.

it is too late to squeal now, and you had better make the best of it. There he comes with a horse for you and is motioning for you to come out."

Billy very reluctantly went out, and Sam said: "Here, Smith, this is the best I can do for ye just now; d'ye think he can carry ye?"

"I doubt it," replied Billy.

"Well, you will have to do the best you can with him. To-night we have a fifteen-mile dash down the river to a ranch where we can get you a good popper. Take him to the stable, feed him some grain and brush him up a little. I will be back here at ten o'clock to-night, and shall expect you to be ready. D'ye hear?"

Billy returned to the house greatly relieved to know that his new boss was to be absent for a few hours, while Sam and John, unable to keep so good a joke to themselves, crossed the river to tell Al. Wise and Billy Cole. While at Al. Wise's house they heard three shots fired in rapid succession over at

Olive's, and rushing across to see what was the matter, they found John Wheat lying on the ground almost splitting his sides with laughter..

It appears that the cook, upon the departure of the supposed Dick Milton, came to the conclusion that discretion in this case would be the better part of valor, and hastily packing up his few belongings, he started to leave the country. He had gotten but a few rods from the ranch house when he was discovered by John Wheat, who called out to him to halt. Billy paid no heed to the command, but started to run, and Wheat, seeing a stranger trying to run away from him, determined to find out the reason why. He accordingly fired three shots over the fellow's head. Smith stopped and ran back to Wheat with a face as white as a sheet.

"Who are you, anyway?" inquired Wheat.

"My name is Smith, and I've been cooking for Olive. Old Dick Milton came along to-day and like a fool I hired out to him. He is going to hold up some ranch to-night and will be back at ten o'clock after me, and I'm going to get out of this before he comes."

With this he started, and was just disappearing on the trail down the river, on a not very graceful trot, when Sweely and Finch returned to see who was shooting and discovered Wheat in the middle of his laughing fit. Poor Billy floundered along as far as Virg. Allyn's, better known as the Brighton ranch, where Billy Allyn kindly took a horse and volunteered to pilot the fugitive across the river, as the latter had concluded to try to make his way to Plum creek, where he thought he could evade the clutches of the terrible Dick Milton. In crossing the river the pony got stuck in the quicksand and Smith slid from his back into the water, waded to the opposite shore and took to the hills as fast as his legs could carry him. He got as far as Louis Wambsgan's on Wood river by dark, and put up there for the night, telling Wambsgan the whole story. When he went to bed he placed an old razor and a dirk made out of a case knife, under his pillow, resolved, if Milton should call for him before morning, to sell his life as dearly as possible. The next day he walked and ran into Plum Creek and told of his narrow escape, and also that Dick Milton had planned a raid on some ranch about fifteen miles down the river from Olive's the night previous.

It happened that this story came to the ears of Eugene Boblits and Captain Stuckey, who had been in Plum Creek for several days, and they concluded that their ranch must be the one that was to be raided. They at once mounted their horses, and put out for home through the darkness, where they arrived about daylight the next morning, fully expecting to find their horses all gone; but they were agreeably disappointed to find everything just as they had left it.

Some three years after the events narrated above, John Finch was waiting one day for the train in the station at Plum Creek, when he recognized Billy Smith in the crowd. John pulled his hat down over his eyes to keep Smith from recognizing him and beating him to death for the part he played in the Milton deal. Conscience makes cowards of us all.

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## Brighton Ranch.

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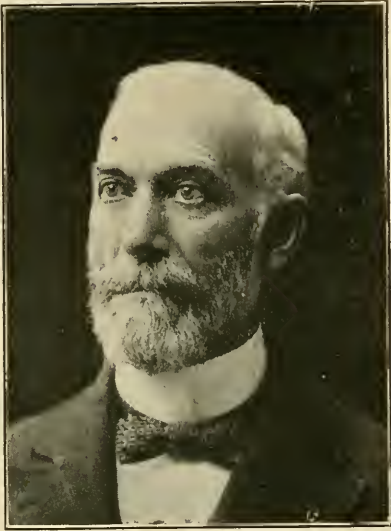
Dr. Victor Coffman.

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One of the most prominent and probably notorious places in Custer county is that which is owned by Dr. Victor H. Coffman of Omaha, Nebraska, and managed by Mr. R. C. Chumbley. It was one of the first ranches of any note, improved and developed on the South Loup river. It is located five miles north of Oconto on the Kearney branch of the Union Pacific railroad. The history of the Brighton and Abel ranches refers to an experience which cost the Brighton ranch people quite \$100,000. This history is that of men having confidence in the country. Their method of handling cattle was in the line of the open range system. Here was a country with the South Loup river running through the most beautiful valley in Nebraska, producing grass equal to any country, for meadows, and the hills growing the buffalo grass, a winter feed unequalled.

The history of this ranch was a high-priced foreman, and the festive cowboys in number riding the range, which extended up and down this river for many miles. Had they spent part of that time putting up hay and providing feed for the winters, notwithstanding the fact of numerous contests and mismanagement which resulted so disastrously to the company, the results would have been different. Here was a good country adapted to stock-raising.

Dr. Coffman became interested in Custer county when he made a deal with Virgil Allyn in 1889, for his equity in the remnant of the Brighton ranch on the South Loup river. He transferred the management to Mr. R. C. Chumbley. Many of the owners of small tracts wished to dispose of their lands, which were purchased by Dr. Coffman, he having confidence in the country for cattle raising which he thought superior to any in the United States. He has continuously demonstrated his convictions by the purchase of adjoining



*Victor H. Coffman M.D.*



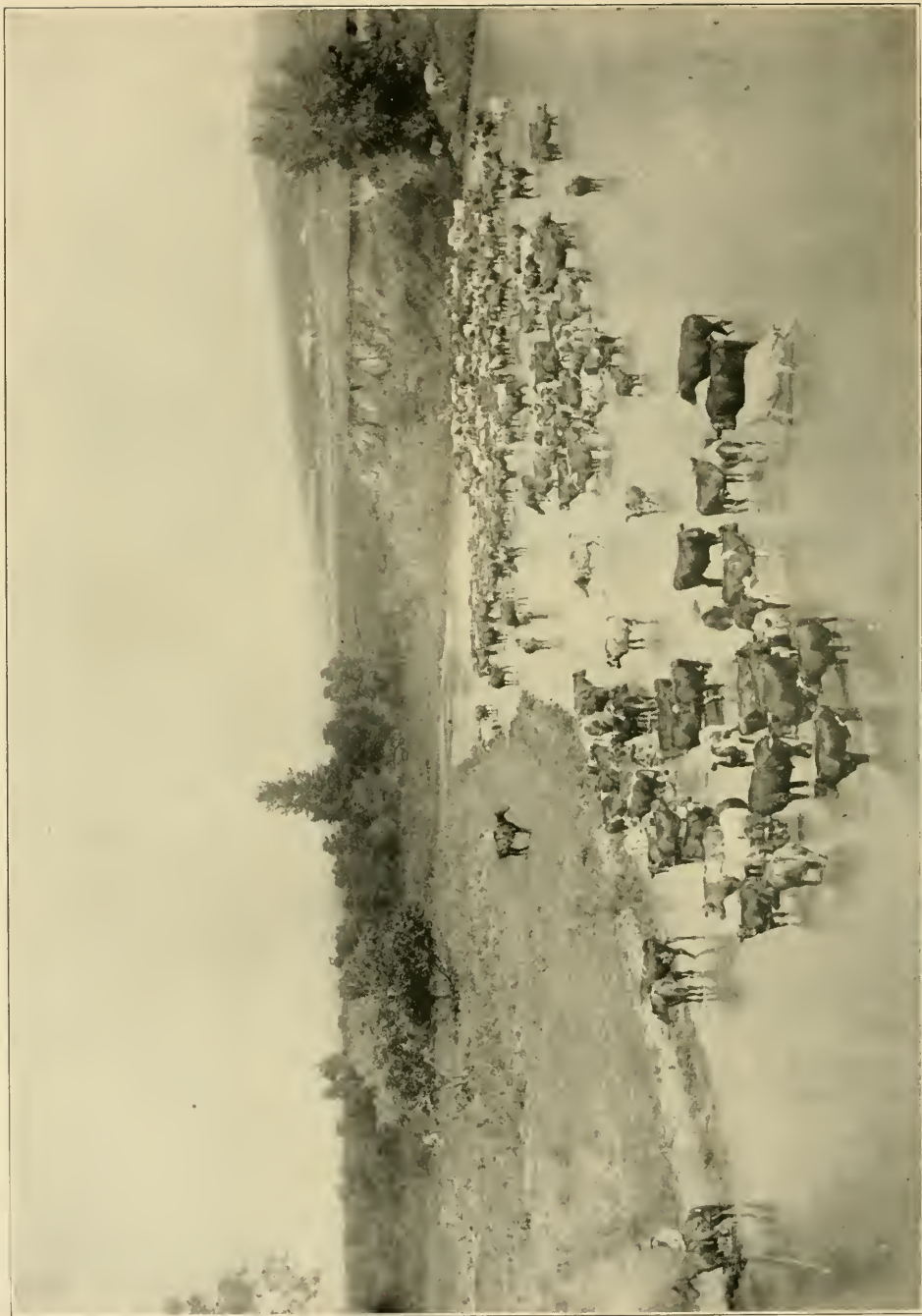
R. C. CHUMBLEY.

lands until the ranch now contains six thousand acres, and to the satisfaction of the owner, who does not regret the money invested. Mr. Chumbley is now the lessee of this ranch, has it stocked with a large number of cattle and horses. He is prepared to raise one thousand acres of corn, which he puts in shock, averaging twenty-five bushels to the acre. He can cut over one thousand tons of hay, alfalfa and native grass, handling one thousand head of cattle in summer and winter, it matters not what the season is.

The history of the immortal Custer is associated with this ranch to the extent of a battle ground with rifle pits still in evidence. It requires but a slight stretch of the imagination to recognize a band of Indians circularing down this valley in war paint until a squad of United States soldiers rose up from their ambush with a volley and then charge, making a picture of the early days of the ranchman's life on the South Loup river, prior to the railroads, which have been the greatest boon to the country's civilization.

The dash of the cowboy, the crack of the pistol, is the perspective of the picture of the present. The locomotive whistle, the telephone "bello," are heard at the ranch, and at no distant day, the Kearney branch of the Union Pacific railroad, through the far-sighted general passenger agent, Mr. E. L. Lomax, of the Union Pacific railroad, will recognize the necessity of a passenger train, instead of the present accommodation, transporting hogs, cattle,





View on the Old Brighton Ranch, showing Mr. Chumbley in left of picture.

women and children in the same train. The women appreciate a good thing, and like to ride on the cars, and there are many living in Custer county who would not live in any other locality, who will remember him in their evening supplications, and the children will rise up and call him blessed.

It now comes to the details of a description of the improvements which make this ranch of so much value. A large amount of fencing which is of the



Abel Ranch, owned by Victor Coffman

best, divides the farming and meadow lands from the pastures. These pastures are divided into winter and summer ranges, each adapted to the season in utilizing them.

At the home place are small pastures where the horses are kept, and others where the cows are, making it a convenience very much appreciated. There are three sets of buildings. Near the center of the place on the east bank of the river, is the home place, a very good house, surrounded by a grove of cedars planted years ago, and a locust grove which has supplied thousands of posts. There is a good barn and feed yards well sheltered by the hills and watered by a windmill, and corrals and branding and dehorning chutes, lanes, and gates and yards for cutting out and separating cattle. There is a bridge across the river at this place, which is a great convenience to everyone who travels or has business in the locality. The county should recognize the necessity of a bridge at every road crossing on this river. There is above the center of the ranch a small house for the use of the tenant, which materially



R. C. Chumbley dehoring Cattle on the old Brighton Ranch.



adds to the convenience of operating the place. The upper, or Abel ranch, has a cedar log house, two stories, which will last a life time. It is situated at the foot of a large bluff which rises to the north, affording the best winter protection. A fine grove, and through this a stream of water fed by springs, which are perennial and truly hot springs, for they never freeze up. This is the banner winter place on the ranch and to be appreciated must be visited when a blizzard is blowing; then you can well imagine you are at a winter resort sure enough.

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(By Puck.)

One of the first ill-starred land deals in Custer county took place in the northwestern portion before the county was organized. A man whom we will call Jekyll first took a claim and afterwards abandoned it. As it was a valuable piece of land on account of the number of cedar trees growing upon it, which were worth thousands of dollars, several parties were very desirous of getting a filing on the land. Now Johnny Jump-up put off for the land office at Grand Island, and found upon his arrival there that the land was in the North Platte district. In the meantime Sinbad the sailor sent post haste for Hardy and furnished him a horse upon which the latter outstripped all competitors in the race to the land office. In consideration of Sinbad the sailor's assistance, Hardy was to give him a half interest in the land. While all this was going on, some parties induced Crazy Horse to move into the dugout on the abandoned claim left by Jekyll, to move his stock onto it and keep possession. This, of course, would give him first claim to the land and he could file his claim later. When Hardy returned from the land office with the claim in his pocket, as he thought, he was a very much disgusted man when he found Crazy Horse was in possession of the premises. He counseled with Sinbad, who informed him that Crazy Horse undoubtedly had legal possession of the land. Hardy, nevertheless, proceeded to cut down some cedar trees and constructed a house, which induced Crazy Horse to take to the war path, and Hardy, being a timid man, vacated. Sinbad was again consulted and again promised a half interest in the land if he could help Hardy secure it. They then and there laid a scheme to scare Crazy Horse off the claim. A bogus court was organized, and Lawyer Slick was employed to represent Hardy. Judge Dried Corn issued papers for the arrest of Crazy Horse for threatening to shoot Hardy. Constable Carball brought Crazy Horse into court. After hearing the evidence the justice (who, by the way, was from Missouri,) looked the prisoner sternly in the face and said: "You must show me why you should not be sentenced to the penitentiary for life or else pay \$500 for threatening to shoot Hardy." Crazy Horse could not show him, of course, being nothing but a poor, unedu-



cated man, and the judge, after carefully consulting the pages of an old agricultural report, sentenced Crazy Horse to two years in the penitentiary. Then Lawyer Slick took the prisoner to one side and agreed to have his sentence commuted provided he would give peaceable possession of the land and give Hardy two cows. With the penitentiary staring him in the face, Crazy Horse thought he was getting off cheap by agreeing to this arrangement, as shown by the record in the old agricultural report. Hardy moved into the dugout vacated by Crazy Horse and secured the land, but it may not be out of place to note here that when he found himself securely in possession he entirely forgot his promise to Sinbad and kept the whole thing himself.

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## Freezing of Trapper in Powell Canon.

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J. D. Haskell.

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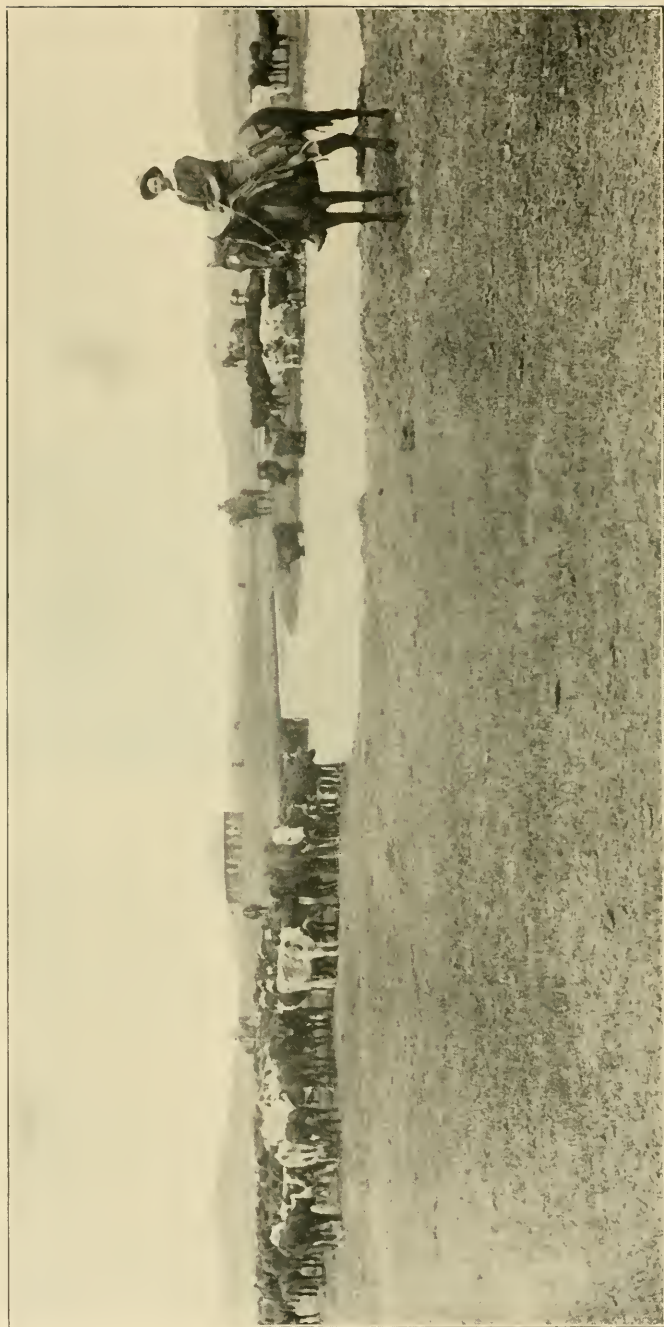
Elisha W. Clark, a hunter and trapper, was frozen to death in Powell canon, northeast of Arnold, in December, 1879. Clark had been a colonel in the war of the rebellion, was a widower, and had for a number of years followed hunting and trapping for a livelihood. He established his camp in Powell canon on December 2nd, his only companions being his team and a couple of large greyhounds. About a week afterwards he was seen by a cedar hauler on his way to Mr. Goodyear's hay stacks after some hay for his team, and said that he intended to carry the hay in his arms to his camp, which was three miles away. No more was thought of the trapper for some time by the few residents of the neighborhood, but one day the dead bodies of his two hounds were found near Mr. Goodyear's haystacks. The weather was intensely cold, and the ground was covered with snow, and it was feared that Clark might have shared the fate that had apparently overtaken his dogs. A search was immediately instituted, but no trace of the missing man or his team could be found. On the 1st of January a party of cedar haulers reported that they had found a wagon and two horses in one of the numerous pockets of Powell canon, and a party went at once to the place, where they discovered the horses. One of the horses was dead and the other nearly so. As Clark had been missing for three weeks, it is supposed that the poor animals had been there about that length of time. They had gnawed the bark off the tree to which they were tied and eaten every bush and twig within reach. One of the horses had eaten the limb off to which he was tied, thus saving



View in Powell canon near head.

his life. The party scoured the vicinity thoroughly without result. The county commissioners offered a reward of \$50 to any one finding the body of Clark. During the following spring, while hunting for some horses, C. W. Hughey of Arnold came across the dead body of the unfortunate trapper at the head of a small pocket in the canon, his gun by his side. He had evidently died on his knees, apparently crawling into the narrow place to get such protection from the cold as its walls afforded.

It was nearly night when he had been seen at the stacks after hay, and it is the supposition that in attempting to return to his camp in the darkness he became bewildered in the maze of pockets that indent the canon, until overcome with weariness he sank down and was frozen to death. The body was found five miles southwest of where his camp had been, and had he proceeded another mile in the direction in which he was apparently traveling when he succumbed, he would have come into the South Loup valley within sight of Chapin's ranch.



T. L. V. Ranch, in Logan and Custer Counties, owned by the Tierney Bros., Broken Bow.

## Craving Down of Settlers' Houses by Cowboys.

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Early in the fall of 1884 a few settlers located homesteads in the northeast corner of the Brighton Ranch Company's pasture, on Ash creek. This pasture was about fifteen miles square, and extended several miles south of the Loup river almost to Broken Bow, and was inclosed with a wire fence. The land being government land, and subject to entry, these settlers served notice on the ranch company to remove their fence from about their claims within thirty days. The company paid no attention to this request, and at the expiration of the time the settlers made a raid on the fence and appropriated the posts to make roofs for their sod houses. Roofs in those days were made by laying a large log, called a ridge log, lengthwise of the building at the top. The fence posts were then laid up to form the rafters, to which brush was fastened, the whole being covered with one or two layers of prairie sod, coated with several inches of yellow clay procured from the canons, which turned water very effectually.

In a short time after the appropriation of these posts the foreman of the ranch had the settlers arrested and taken to Broken Bow for trial. The sheriff had no sooner departed with the prisoners than the second foreman of the ranch rigged up two large wagons, drawn by four mules each, and proceeded to the houses of the settlers, accompanied by a number of the cowboys. They drove up to a house, took a team and a large chain, hitched onto the projecting end of the ridge log, and in about three seconds the neat little home was a shapeless mass of sod, hay, brush and posts mixed up in almost inextricable confusion. The ranchmen then culled their posts from the wreck and loaded them into the wagons, when they went to the next house and repeated the operation, leaving the occupants to pick their few household goods out of the ruins at their leisure. The boys were having great fun at the expense of the settlers, cracking jokes and making merry as the work of destruction went on. After destroying several houses in this manner they proceeded to the claim of a Mr. King, and Mrs. King, seeing them approaching, met them with a shotgun and dared them to come on. Had it been Mr. King, the invitation would possibly have been accepted, but the cowboys were too gallant to enter into a quarrel with a lady, and withdrew without molesting her.



In the meantime a boy of the settlement had been despatched to Broken Bow on the fastest pony that could be procured, to secure help, and quite a posse of men from the town started for the scene of action. The foreman of the ranch, who was in Broken Bow at the time as complaining witness against the settlers, heard of this and sent one of his cowboys in haste to warn the second foreman of the impending invasion. This messenger arrived at the settlement in advance of the citizens and gave the alarm. The house-wreckers were thoroughly scared, and turning the heads of their mule teams towards the South Loup, applied the whip freely. As the mules began to run over the rough prairie the posts began to fall off the wagons, and as the teams began to show signs of weariness the cowboys began to heave off more posts to lighten the load as they bumped along, leaving a trail behind them like that of a railroad construction gang. Arriving at the ranch, they turned out their mules, secured their Winchesters and made a break for the hills on the south side of the river to await developments. When the posse of rescuers arrived at the little settlement and found the invaders gone, they did not follow them, but returned to Broken Bow. The cowboys remained in the hills two days, watching for the approach of the enemy in vain.

The ranch company failed to make any case against the settlers, it being shown that the ranch pasture was government land and that the claims were lawfully held by the homesteaders, who had a perfect right to remove the fence which inclosed their property. The prisoners were accordingly released and were not again molested. The second foreman of the ranch was subsequently arrested for tearing down the houses of the settlers, tried at Broken Bow, found guilty, fined \$25 and costs and confined one day in the county jail.

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## Tailing Up a Texas Cow.

Al Wise.

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At the time of the Olive trial most of the men connected with that ranch were absent as witnesses, help was very scarce at the ranch, and the few that were left there were principally engaged in "tailing up" cows that were so poor that they got stuck in the mud along the river and were not able to get up without assistance. Reader, did you ever attempt to "tail up" a spirited, ambitious cow? If not, you have missed a whole lot of fun—and so has the cow. A little experience of mine in that direction may be entertaining to the reader—I know it was to me. I had been down at the corral attending to some horses when I noticed a cow on the bank of the river trying



AL. WISE.

to get on her feet, but falling back after each attempt. Not wishing to take the trouble to saddle a horse, I went over to her on foot to assist her out of her difficulty. I soon saw that there was fight in her, but concluded she was too weak to make me any trouble. Grabbing her tail, I passed it over my shoulder and gave it several twists around by arm, getting as much of it in my hand as possible. The old cow puffed and shook her head in protest. I paid no attention to her objections, but bent my back and lifted. The cow did likewise, and the way that old heifer got on her feet took the breath out of me. I saw that she was on the warpath, and that my only hope of safety was to keep hold of her tail. With a bellow she turned her glaring eyes around on me and took after me, spinning around like a top. By keeping a firm hold on her tail I just managed to keep a few inches ahead of her long horns. After a few turns to the right she tried it awhile to the left, but with no better success. The waltz was becoming awfully monotonous to me, and as we worked toward a bank about ten feet high by the edge of the river, I dropped her tail and jumped over it with one bound. The cow was a little dazed by the performance, but as soon as she realized the situation she made for the bank, probably with the intention of following me, but gave it up when she came to the foot of it, pawed the ground and bellowed her defiance, and walked away shaking her head, probably hooking me in her mind. Two days after this, as I was riding along the bank of the river, I saw the old lady down again, but I concluded to leave her to her fate, and for all I know her bones are buried in the mud where I last saw her.

## Clear Creek.

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(Puck.)

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In the summer of 1879 a couple of young men drove up to the house of W. W. Potts with a fine span of mules and requested lodging for the night. One of the strangers was a tall, red-headed boy, and the other a stout lad of about the same age. The red-headed fellow was a great talker, and wanted to bring Mr. Potts a bunch of sheep to keep on shares. The other fellow was a fiddler and entertained the Potts family with some musical performances until it was time to retire. Mr. Potts lived in a dugout about fourteen feet square and the two boys were put to bed on the floor. They slept rather late the next morning, and as the door of the dugout consisted only of a blanket hung up as a curtain three horsemen who rode up before the family and their guests were astir, had no difficulty in finding out who was inside. Mrs. Potts was the only one in the house who was awake, and she saw the curtain cautiously drawn aside, revealing the face of a man who was peeking in. The man hastily stepped inside, drew a revolver and stood over the two sleeping boys. Another man outside fired a Winchester as a signal for two other men who were near by, as it afterwards appeared. But one can imagine the embarrassment of a farmer's family being awakened in the morning in this manner. Mr. Potts soon took in the situation, as he had had his suspicions of his two guests the night before. As a precaution he had taken their saddles and put them in the back of the dugout, so that if they had attempted to get up and leave in the night they could not get them without being discovered. The five men were from Buffalo county, and consisted of Captain Anderson, his deputy and three assistants. The boys had stolen the mules from a saloon keeper at Kearney, and Anderson and his men were sent in pursuit of them. Mr. Potts had killed a fine, black-tailed deer the day before, and Mrs. Potts was called upon to exhibit her skill at cooking venison for breakfast for her seven uninvited guests. The boys were taken back to Kearney, tried, found guilty of stealing the mules and sent up for three years.

In the fall of 1878 Mr. and Mrs. Potts came up into Custer county looking for land and stayed all night at Asa Gipes'. The next morning as they were coming out of a canon they met a man with a load of meat and supposed it was beef. On coming to old man Mitchell's place they found him

eating dinner and were invited to dine with him. Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Potts if he had ever eaten elk meat. Upon being answered in the negative he said:

"You are eating elk meat now."

Mr. Potts replied that if he had not been told he would have thought it was beef. He here learned that the man he had met in the morning was Ketchum and that he was on his way to Kearney with a load of elk meat, which was to be sold to a butcher by the name of Gebhart.

Note by Editor—Gebhart was afterwards put on trial to tell what kind of meat it was he bought from Ketchum and he replied that he "pought der meat from Mister Ketchum for cleck meat, he sells him for eleck meat, und he says noding else."

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## History of Broken Bow.

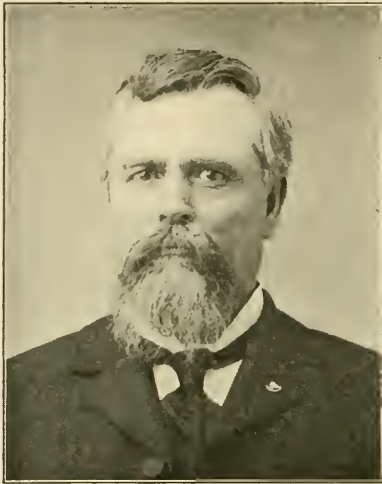
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D. M. Amsberry.

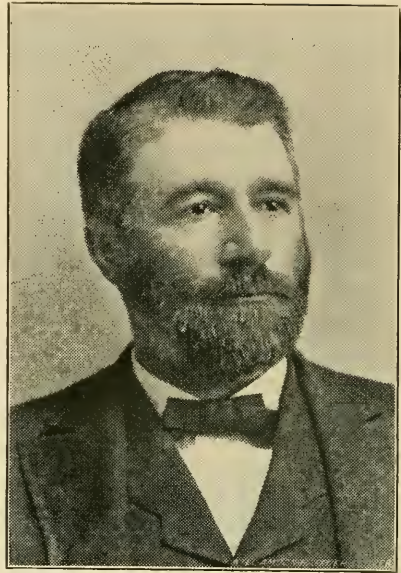
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The city of Broken Bow is located in township 17, range 20, in the center of the county, near the head of the Muddy, a creek that runs through the town. The city enjoys the advantage of fine schools and has seven churches, in which religious services are maintained. It has had no saloons for two years. Business is good and the population is gradually increasing. Broken Bow is the county seat of Custer county, one of the largest counties in the state of Nebraska. It is known far and near on account of the oddity of its name. The name was suggested by a string of circumstances, rather than romance. In 1880, Wilson Hewitt, who was a homesteader, near where the city is now located, on request of the few settlers in the vicinity, petitioned the government for a postoffice at his place and sent in a name he thought was appropriate. The Postoffice Department approved the application for an office, but rejected the name, as a similar name had been granted on another petition. Two or three other names were sent in, but were rejected for the same reason. Mr. Hewitt was a blacksmith and a hunter, and while out hunting one day found a broken bow and arrow on an old Indian camping ground, and carried them home with him. He put them in a box in his shop with some old irons and thought nothing more about them. Some time afterwards he





D. M. AMSBERRY,  
Editor Broken Bow Republican.



DR. C. PICKETT.

received notice that the third name he had sent to Washington had been rejected, and, going to the box after a piece of iron, he picked up the broken bow and the name, "Broken Bow," came to his mind quickly. He determined to send it in as the name for his postoffice, satisfied that there was no other place of the same name in the state. He consulted his wife, and she being willing, the name was sent in and was accepted by the department. Just how the Indian bow came to be broken and left on the old camp ground, is only a matter of conjecture. The following romance, written by Mrs. M. A. B. Martin, one of the early settlers of the county, tells the story of the broken bow:

#### BROKEN BOW.

Slow the moon rose o'er the valley,  
The valley of the Big Sioux river,  
Shining down upon the wigwams;  
They, the red men of the Sioux tribe,  
They had camped to hold a council  
With the chief of the Dakotas,  
Known among them as War Eagle,  
For the scalp hung from his girdle;  
He had slain among the canons,  
To the southward, to the westward,  
He had fought and butchered many;  
But his brother, Navasota,  
Had been slain among the canons;  
He fell fighting the Paduchas  
For the fair lands of Nebraska,  
Each tribe claimed the elk and bison.

Claimed the deer among the cedars  
That roamed among the tallest cedars,  
Fed upon the grass that grew there.  
The Paduchas gained the battle,  
Drove the Sioux from off the valley,  
Far beyond the Niobrara,  
To the valley of the Big Sioux  
Where dwelt the tribe of the Dakotas,  
Dwelt the Indian maid, Winneta,  
The daughter of brave Navasota.  
In the council Eagle Feather  
Sat and smoked beside his father,  
Sat and smoked the pipe among them,  
Listened to the great War Eagle,  
As he planned the coming marriage  
Of the Indian maid, Winneta,



MRS. M. A. B. MARTIN.



H. POTTER, M. D.

To his son, the Eagle Feather,  
Was not her mother of the Sioux tribe  
Rich in wealth of lands and ponies  
When the father of Winneta  
Claimed her for his Indian bride?  
And the union of the two tribes  
Made them richer, made them stronger.  
Now the union of Winneta  
To my son, the Eagle Feather,  
Will more united make the friendship  
Of the Sioux and the Dakotas.  
Then they called the Indian maiden,  
Told her bid the Eagle Feather  
To do some daring deed of prowess  
To prove his great love for Winneta—  
He shall do Winneta's bidding,  
With her eyes downcast and thoughtful,  
With her voice so clear and mournful,  
Spoke she then to Eagle Feather:  
"Go to the land of the Nebraskas,  
Far beyond the Niobrara,  
Where the Sioux and the Dakotas  
Hunted, fished and roamed the prairies,  
The deep canons far beyond them,  
To the eastward flows the North Loup,  
To the southward flows the South Loup,  
Where the foes of my dead father  
Dwell and hunt among the canons,  
Kill the buffalo by the hundreds,  
Kill the dark friends of Winneta,  
Killed the brave chief, Navasota,  
Will you go and bring a token  
From the spot where sleeps my father?  
Bring his bow and bring his quiver,  
Bring his quiver full of arrows,  
That the Paduchas may not use them  
To slay more friends of poor Winneta:  
Ere another moon grows darkened  
You may return and wed Winneta."  
Then arose the Eagle Feather,  
Cast his eyes upon the maiden,  
"I will go and do your bidding,"  
Seized his tomahawk and scalp-knife,  
Fastened them into his girdle,

Fastened then his bow and quiver,  
A new quiver full of arrows,  
Strode he out into the moonlight,  
Mid the war whoop of the red men,  
Walked away adown the valley,  
Walked he on until the sunrise  
Found him hurrying southward, west-  
ward,  
To the Niobrara valley.  
Stopped at night beneath the cedars,  
Made a fire of withered branches,  
Slept beside the campfire soundly,  
Slept until the wild birds called him,  
Called him to pursue his journey  
By their sweet songs in the morning,  
Welcoming the pleasant sunrise,  
Southward, westward, Eagle Feather  
Hurried on to do the bidding  
Of the dark-eyed Indian maiden,  
For five days the Eagle Feather  
Journeyed on toward the South Loup,  
Slept at night beside the streamlet,  
Tired, weary, on the last night  
Made his fire beside the Muddy;  
Laid him down to rest and slumber,  
Heeding not the howling coyote  
Warning him of coming danger,  
Warning him his foes were near him;  
Slept and dreamed of home and kindred,  
Dreamed he saw the dark-eyed maiden  
Coming down the path to meet him,  
Coming down to greet her lover  
To receive the bow and quiver;  
Dreamed he on till almost sunrise,  
When the war whoop echoed wildly  
Through the canons on the prairies,  
Echoed up and down the Muddy,  
Waked he then among their yelling,  
For his foes had found him sleeping,  
Then they scalped the Eagle Feather,  
For they numbered near a hundred;  
Forced him for to tell his errand,  
Then they took his bow and quiver,  
Took his bow and broke it rudely,

Threw it down to warn the Sioux tribe  
 That they'd slain their Eagle Feather.  
 Then they took their suffering prisoner  
 With them far beyond the South Loup.  
 Let him die and soon forgot him.  
 Many moons grew bright and darkened.  
 Yet the Eagle Feather came not.  
 Never came to claim his promise,  
 Never more returned to meet her.  
 "He must be dead," she murmured  
 lowly.  
 "Or he would come to poor Winneta.  
 Farewell, Eagle Feather, farewell,  
 Your Winneta's heart is breaking.  
 Breaking for her Indian lover.  
 I will go away in sadness  
 To the wigwam of my mother,  
 Lay me down and sleep the death sleep.  
 In the spirit land I'll meet him,  
 Meet him and my brave old father;  
 In the hunting grounds of the red men,  
 Happy land of the Great Spirits,  
 Will commune with Eagle feather  
 In the land beyond the sunset.  
 Years have passed and left the traces  
 Of the Sioux and the Dakotas,  
 Westward they have journeyed farther,  
 And their tribes are growing smaller.  
 Their hunting grounds are now rich corn  
 fields  
 For the white man's plow and reaper;  
 And their cabins dot the prairie,  
 And they cut away the cedars.  
 Frighten all the elk and bison.  
 From Nebraska's fair prairies,  
 Years swept by, the pale-face settlers  
 On the prairies of Nebraska,  
 On the swiftly flowing South Loup,  
 Built their cabins on the North Loup,  
 Hunted on the Niobrara,  
 Built their cabins on the Muddy,

Near the place where Eagle Feather.  
 The young chief of the Dakotas,  
 Met his fate by the Paduchas.  
 Came the pale-face, walking slowly,  
 Thinking of the growing city  
 They were building on the Muddy.  
 For many men had come together,  
 Brought their wives and children with  
 them.  
 To populate fair Custer county.  
 And the people of the Muddy  
 Now must name this fair young city.  
 For a new name searched they often,  
 Oft rejected, half discouraged,  
 While out walking on the Muddy  
 Came he where the bow lay broken;  
 Pondered he of how it came there  
 All alone beside the Muddy.  
 Pondered he, this pale-faced Hewitt,  
 As he homeward walked more quickly.  
 "I have found a bow that's broken,"  
 Said he to his fair wife waiting.  
 "An Indian bow that has been broken  
 And left beside the Muddy river.  
 Let us name our city for it,  
 Name our city Broken Bow;  
 Sent the name, it was accepted,  
 Never was a name just like it,  
 Never one half so romantic,  
 Full of wonder came each stranger.  
 "Such a strange name for a city,"  
 Said each stranger when they heard it.  
 Broken Bow, in Custer county,  
 Built beside the Muddy river,  
 Near beside those wondrous canons  
 Where the Indian tribes had waged war.  
 Where the coyote warned the red chief,  
 While he dreamed of dark Winneta;  
 Where he suffered death by torture,  
 Died and left his Broken Bow—  
 Left to us his Broken Bow.

Note—The funny part of the story is Mr. Hewitt prized this broken bow very much as a relic, but one day the hired girl was cleaning up and put the broken bow in the fire with other rubbish.

The townsite was located and plat filed in June, 1882, by Jesse Gandy. The postoffice, which was then kept by C. D. Pelham, who had a small stock of goods half a mile from the townsite, was moved to the new city, and hence Mr. Pelham enjoys the distinction of being the first merchant of Broken Bow, as well as its first postmaster. Wilson Hewitt had been elected county clerk the fall previous, and had built a sod house near the proposed townsite, which he occupied as his office. The county treasurer, C. T. Crawford, and the county superintendent, D. M. Amsberry, occasionally held forth in the same building in the discharge of their respective duties. Soon after the townsite was laid out the townsite promoters provided temporary frame buildings for the county officers. County Clerk Hewitt and County Judge J. S. Benjamin occupied a room on the west side of the public square, and the county treasurer and the county superintendent a building on the east side. This arrangement was continued until the fall of 1884, when the county built a frame building large enough to accommodate all four of the offices. The question of relocating the county seat was an issue during the summer and fall, in which Broken Bow





First Printing House in Broken Bow. (The Republican)

and Westerville were rivals. The county seat had been located previously near the South Loup, but the site had never been occupied, as the county records were always kept at the homes of the several county officers. The victory inspired courage and many important battles have since been fought and won by a combined effort of its citizens. The only change in county officers up to this time was the election of Dr. R. C. Talbot as treasurer to succeed C. T. Crawford, in the fall of 1883. One of the first houses built was a sod building by R. H. Miller, on the corner where the Broken Bow State Bank now stands, which was used for the family residence and also for a printing office. Mr. Miller established the first newspaper of the town, the Custer County Republican. The first issue of the Republican was June 29, 1882. The paper is still published in the city, and not only claims the distinction of being the first newspaper published at Broken Bow, but of being the oldest paper in the county. The present editor and publisher bought the paper of Mr. Miller March 3, 1887.

During the summer of 1882 the following families located in the new town and engaged in business: Jesse, James P. and A. W. Gandy, J. S. Kirkpatrick, C. W. West, J. H. Fleming, T. E. Wheeler & Co., G. W. Trefren, C. T. Crawford, C. D. Pelham, J. L. Oxford and R. H. Miller. J. P. Gandy built a





MR. THORP, Miller.



E. GSCHWIND, Police Judge.



F. E. TAYLOR, Photographer.



N. T. GADD, Attorney.



I. A. RENEAU, Abstracter.



S. P. GROAT.



DR. C. DAY.



REV. G. BOOMER,  
Pastor Christian Church.

log house in which he kept a few goods and accommodated the traveling public with meals and lodging until a hotel was erected. J. H. Fleming built the first hotel on the corner now occupied by the Grand Central. As the lumber and all building material had to be freighted from Kearney by teams it was a tedious task to build. By August Mr. Fleming had the Broken Bow hotel, a



Residence of I. A. Reneau, Broken Bow.

two-story structure, nearly completed to accommodate the public, and they had frequently to put up with scanty fare for lack of teams with which to freight the necessary provisions, but as Mrs. Fleming was a most excellent cook she made the best of what she had and all were satisfied. Frequently a team would be sent twenty-five miles to purchase butter, and would return with only a few pounds. J. H. West was the proprietor of the first drug store, and G. W. Trefren established a law office, being followed soon by J. S. Kirkpatrick, who is now a member of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission. Mrs. T. E. Wheeler & Co. put in the first stock of general merchandise in October, 1882. Mrs. Wheeler had come from Aurora in August and con-

tracted with the townsite company to build a store room to lease to her in consideration of bringing in a stock of goods. She freighted the goods from Grand Island by way of Loup City and Westerville. That winter Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler lived in the back part of the store room, with only a carpet for a partition. C. T. Crawford built and occupied his house as a residence, restaurant and treasurer's office the same fall. J. L. Oxford, one of the county commissioners, built the first feed barn, just east of the present site of the Grand Central hotel, near where Mr. Lee's barn now stands. Jesse Gandy put in the first butcher shop that summer, and bought his first beef from Judge Benjamin, who lived on a homestead adjoining town on the north. The first school was taught by Mrs. M. E. Lewis in a sod house.

With the spring of 1883 the population had more than trebled. Frank Crable added a lumber yard, a much-needed branch of business. H. G. Rogers, the silent partner of T. E. Wheeler & Co., located here, bringing with him an additional stock of dry goods valued at \$10,000. He built a new store building in which to accommodate his goods, and Mrs. T. E. Wheeler & Co. also added a line of hardware. Miss Litta Mengle put in a stock of millinery and associated with her Miss Laura Morrison as dressmaker. Both have since married, but each is still engaged in the same business. Marcus Reynier added the second drug store, and in October of the same year L. H. Jewett established the Custer County Bank, which was the first bank in town, with S. H. Burnham of Lincoln as president, and Mr. Jewett as cashier. Silas A. Holcomb, subsequently governor of the state, and at present a member of the Supreme Court, located in the town that season and engaged in the practice of law. S. C. Beebe, publisher of the Custer County Leader, moved his paper from Westerville to Broken Bow in the spring of 1883, and continued to publish it until June, 1888, when the plant was sold to the Central Nebraska Bank. R. H. Miller succeeded Mr. Beebe as editor.

The first church was built by the Methodists in 1883. It was the first brick building in town and is now occupied by Dr. C. L. Mullins as a sanitarium. During this year the townsite was enlarged by additions made by J. P. and A. W. Gandy, and the sale of town lots to prospective residents became brisk. The students of Blackstone were increased by two that winter, James Ledwich, who engaged in the law and real estate business, and who is one of the prominent attorneys of the county at this time, and C. J. Elliott, who came from Illinois, returning to that state after a few years. Up to this time the town had been without a practicing physician. The only one in the vicinity was Dr. R. C. Talbot, who lived some eight miles away on a homestead, and who protested against practicing medicine. Dr. Wyman Hull appeared on the scene and Dr. Talbot proposed to him that if he would locate





Realty Block in Broken Bow, costing \$100,000, where fourteen years ago the old Marble Top Hotel stood. (See Photo.)



Old Marble Top Hotel in 1886, with Dr. Hull and his favorite Ponies in front. Location now occupied by the Realty Block.

in town he would turn over all his practice to him. The inducement was sufficient, and Dr. Hull at once secured a sod house that J. P. Gandy had built and moved his family to Broken Bow. The doctor did not prove a drawing card as a physician, and soon fitted up rooms in his house and engaged in the hotel business. As rains were quite frequent in the early days, his guests were frequently disturbed in their slumbers by the roof leaking. To remedy this annoyance the doctor covered the house with a heavy coating of cement, which gave his hostelry the name of "The Marble Top." Mrs. Hull and daughter were fine cooks and good entertainers, while the doctor was a splendid hustler for business, and they soon built up one of the best paying businesses in the town and the Marble Top became a household word.

In 1884 the population of Broken Bow largely increased and the demand for both residence and business houses caused a number of buildings to be built. L. Lavender and W. D. Garlock, brick makers, put in two yards and

manufactured enough to supply the demand. The Commercial hotel was built that season by J. P. Gandy and A. W. Gandy. D. M. Amsberry and G. W. Runyon built the three brick store rooms on the north side of the public square. The Custer County Bank building, now occupied by James Ledwich as a law office, was also built that year. A brick schoolhouse in the southeast-



South Side School Building, Broken Bow.

ern part of town, and two dwelling houses by Isaac Merchant and Steve Chaple were built in the fall, and the frame buildings put up were numerous. With the influx of 1884 came H. M. Sullivan, now district judge, A. R. Humphry, who was subsequently commissioner of public lands and buildings, and Fred G. Waite, a brilliant young lawyer from Chicago. This season County Treasurer Talbot and County Superintendent Amsberry moved their families to town and each put up a residence. Of the new enterprises started in 1884, the principal were: Holland & McDonald, hardware and implements; the Broken Bow Times, by Trefren & Meseraull; Kloman & Arnold, bank;

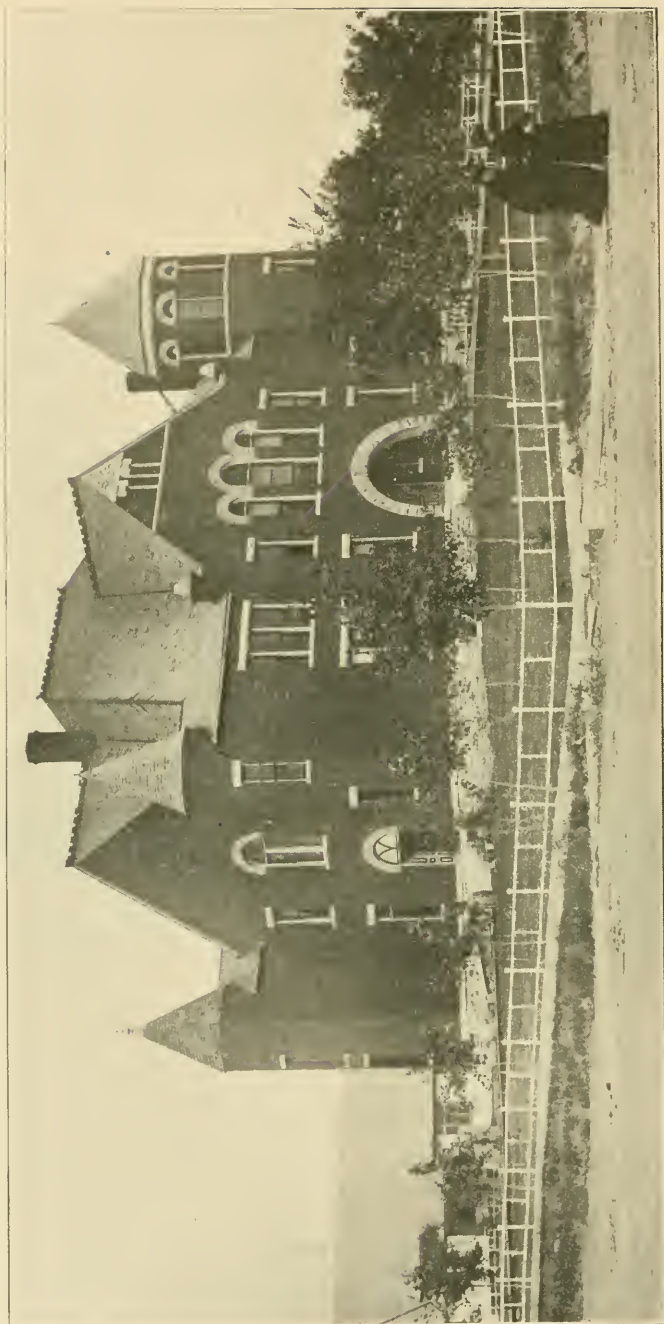
Moore & Wright, real estate. The village was incorporated that spring and the first officers appointed were Isaac Merchant, president; J. S. Kirkpatrick, Jesse Gandy and D. M. Amsberry, trustees, and E. P. Campbell, city attorney. The first officers elected were: Isaac Merchant, H. A. Graham, D. M. Amsberry and J. S. Kirkpatrick, trustees; H. M. Sullivan, attorney; E. P. Campbell, clerk.



Baptist Church, Broken Bow.

In 1886 the town received another substantial lift that came as a surprise by the arrival of R. O. Phillips, president of the Lincoln Townsite Company. He bought a half section of land adjoining the town on the north, at big figures, and it resulted in corner lots going sky high. This was soon followed by the B. & M. surveyors up the Muddy valley, who included Broken Bow in their line of survey. Not only townsite speculators and business men rushed in to secure desirable town property, but within a few months homesteaders had filed on all the desirable farming land in the vicinity. Among those who preceded the locomotive, or came soon after its arrival in that year, were: Freisheimer & Haerberle, druggists; S. B. Thompson & House, and B. S. Lilly, real estate agents; C. B. Hayes, boots and shoes; J. C. Bowen, grocer; Hans Dierks, lumber; Bogue & Sherwood, lumber; the Chicago Lum-





The Custer County Court House

ber Company; W. H. Cline, general merchandise; W. J. Woods, furniture; Wilde & Squires, hardware; S. B. Frost, restaurant; S. A. Barstow, contractor and builder; Edwards & Emil, blacksmiths and wagon makers; C. A. Thum, clothing; J. H. Inman, agent for the Lincoln Townsite Company. The railroad addition was surveyed and put on the market and a number of new buildings erected or commenced on the new addition, including a number of residences as well as business buildings. On the old townsite was built the



First Train into Broken Bow, Aug. 26, 1886.

Pacific hotel and Graham Bros. store, which has since become the property of Mrs. T. E. Wheeler, and is known as the Grand Central hotel, one of the best equipped and best conducted hostleries in central Nebraska. The B & M. railroad let no time go to waste after the survey was made, and on August 26, 1886, the road was completed to Broken Bow and the first locomotive made its appearance in Custer county's rapidly growing capital. C. E. Wilkin-

son of Lincoln was the first station agent and telegraph operator, and afterwards served as mayor of the city. In the latter part of this year O. P. Perley, a capitalist of Maine, located here and invested a large sum of money in the Custer County Bank. On the 15th of February, 1886, it was organized as the First National Bank, with S. H. Burnham, president; L. H. Jewett, cashier, and O. P. Perley, assistant cashier. The following year the Central Nebraska Bank was established, with O. J. Collman, president, and J. H. Inman, cashier. The North Side Opera block, the Inman hotel, the bank build-



Burlington Hotel, Broken Bow.

ing and a number of smaller buildings for both business and residence purposes, were erected on the Lincoln Townsite Company's addition, including the large flouring mill by G. W. Frey, now owned and operated by S. J. Longergan, and the large planing mill of S. A. Barstow. In this year were established the additional business enterprises of T. M. & J. W. Salisbury, dry goods; Thompson, Wilson & Drake, dry goods; Ryerson & Leslie, books and stationery; H. Walton, drugs, and the Custer County block was built by R. C. Talbot, G. W. Trefren and D. M. Amsberry; also an opera house by Trefren and Hewitt. The growth of the city continued gradually until 1894, many substantial buildings being erected, among which we may mention the Union block, by Taylor Flick, H. Walton and M. Reyner; the Realty block, the Inman and Globe hotels, Walton's and Blackman's barns, Morrison & Gandy's and W. C. Luce's feed mills, the Baptist, United Brethren, Presbyterian, Catholic, Christian and Episcopal churches, the court house, two brick school houses, the postoffice, the I. O. O. F. building. The water works plant was

put in under the supervision of C. A. Weeks by a local company. The Bank of Commerce was established in 1889, with C. J. Stevens, president, and F. M. Rublee cashier.

In 1888 the town had outgrown the rank of a village, and it was organized as a city of the second class. The first officers were: O. P. Perley, mayor; B. S. Lilly, J. L. Cobb, S. A. Barstow, Hans Dierks, councilmen; E. P. Campbell, city clerk; H. M. Sullivan, city attorney. In 1894, owing to a severe drought and a financial panic, the population of the city decreased fully one-



Residence of N. Lee, east of Broken Bow. Mr. Lee has been a very successful farmer and is one of the early settlers of the county-

third, and several of the business houses suspended the year following. The number included Kloman & Arnold's bank, the Central Nebraska National Bank, Barstow's planing mill, Wm. H. Cline, D. S. Lohr, Graham Bros. and many others. Since 1895 the population has been gradually increasing, and several business firms have been added. The population in 1890 had reached over 1,600, and in 1894 it was estimated at 1,800. In 1895 the number did not exceed 1,100. By the census of 1900 the population was 1,375, and it is now estimated at 1,600.

Among the prominent business firms now in the city are the Broken Bow State Bank, the Farmers' Bank, which was established in 1890, with E. W. Clawson, president, and J. A. Harris, cashier; the Bank of Commerce, Wilson & Drake, merchants; J. C. Bowen, grocer; Grand Central, Commercial and Globe hotels; Walton, Parmenter, Globe, Lee's, Wantz's and Thompson's barns, John & Knerr, general merchandise; Ryerson & Sons, grocers; Peale's





F. E. Taylor, Photographer.

Cash Grocery, Harry Day & Co., general merchandise; W. S. Swan, grocer; J. W. Cook, grocer; A. A. Collom, grocer; Thompson, Rublee & Stevens, general merchandise; Snyder Bros. and W. H. Penn, dry goods and clothing; M. Reyner's Racket Store, Mrs. Predmore and Mrs. Thompson, milliners; O. H



Dugout of David Meeks.

Mevis, dry goods; Bockhacker's book store, C. B. Hayes, boots and shoes; J. G. Haerberle, Ed McComas and R. W. Wilkinson, druggists; Fred Rinne, E. L. Bunch, H. M. Brownell, M. Scanlan and Ed. Maloy, restaurants; A. E. Anderson, F. W. Hayes, jewelers; Tierney Bros., Fred Maulick, Peter Simon



North Side School Building, Broken Bow.

son, meat markets; I. A. Reneau, Willis Cadwell, J. G. Brenizer and W. B. Eastham, real estate dealers; George Willing, D. W. Thompson, hardware merchants; G. W. Apple, harness, buggies and hardware; W. J. Woods, furniture and hardware; C. W. Martin, George Willing, D. W. Thompson, farm implements; I. D. Glaze, marble works; N. Gleim, tailor; Joseph Largey, W. E. Rucker, pool rooms; Dr. C. L. Mullins, hospital; R. C. and W. E. Talbot, Clinton Day, C. Pickett, C. W. Hakes, Pennington and H. Potter, physicians and surgeons; Beacon, Chief and Republican, printing offices; A. R. Humphrey, C. L. Gutterson, L. E. Kirkpatrick, J. B. Smith, N. T. Gadd, E. G. Schwind, James Ledwich, Cameron & Reese, C. H. Holcomb, Moore & Beal, A. Morgan, County Judge J. A. Armour, District Judge H. M. Sullivan, and J. J. Snyder, attorneys at law; John Johnson, John Klebb, blacksmiths and wagon makers; John Delane, S. M. Dorris, blacksmiths; Harry Baugs, F. E. Taylor, photographers.

The city has a school population of over 600 and a most excellent high school, of which J. E. Adamson is superintendent. It has also an excellent telephone system and water works.

## Shooting of John Sanderson.

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When Broken Bow was younger than it now is, much trouble was occasioned by stock running at large in the streets, and as a consequence of ill feeling engendered thereby, one man lost his life, while another got a term in the penitentiary, although he was afterwards pardoned and is now filling an office of public trust in a neighboring county. It appears, however, that using a gun came quite natural to members of that family, as the following incident will show:

Harry, a nephew, found John Sanderson's horses trespassing, captured them and started for Broken Bow on a load of hay, leading the horses behind. Sanderson met him on the outskirts of the town and attempted to take the horses away from the young man, when Harry drew a 22 calibre revolver and commenced blazing away at him. Sanderson fell over, apparently dead, and Harry, horror-stricken at what he had done, ran his horses and load of hay into town, rushed into the sheriff's office and gave himself up as a murderer. In the midst of the excitement occasioned by this dramatic episode, Sanderson arrived on the scene and said: "See, here, young man; if you ever do that again, and I find it out, I'll slap your face." It appeared that Harry had aimed at Sanderson's head, but the latter had thrown up his arm, warding off the bullet, which glanced and struck him in the mouth, doing but little damage. Harry had a trial, but was acquitted.

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## We now Cross the Custer County Line.

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"You have now crossed the Custer county line; prepare to meet your God," shouts the brakey at the top of his voice, flinging open the door of a car on the western bound passenger train on the B. & M. as it slows up at Mason City.

It is the spring of 1887. Custer county has a pretty tough reputation, and many good people back east consider coming out here equivalent to committing suicide, and advise their friends who are foolhardy enough to make the venture to draw up their wills before leaving home. While the brakey was, of course, only joking, there was an old man in this car who took it in

dead earnest. He shortly turned to a traveling companion and said: "I believe you are from Custer county?"

"Yep."

This individual was rather tall, of uncertain age, with shifty blue eyes, very thin, sandy beard and carrotty hair. He wore a broad-brimmed hat and high top boots, and was masticating a huge quid of tobacco.

"Well, my friend, perhaps you can tell me something about the people of your county. I am going to Broken Bow, and am very anxious to know what sort of folks I am likely to meet there. I have heard some pretty tough stories about them."

"You're right, sir; they're a hard lot up hyar, and the sheriff is the ring-leader of the hull outfit. Why, sir, he oughter be in the pen this very minute."

"What has he done?"

"Better ask what he hain't done. Well, I don't mind tellin' ye a few of his exploits. He uster live out on Spring creek and got so handy with a gun that the fellers up and 'lected him sheriff. He had a sheep ranch, and the cattle men didn't like it, because ye know that sheep and cattle don't git along any better together than cattle men and settlers. One time a big fellow moved onto Penn's claim and told him he was goin' to contest it. They say Penn told him there was plenty more vacant land, and he was a poor man, and not able to go to law about it, and that if he would go with him to some of the neighbors he would show him that he was holdin' the claim accordin' to law. Now, ye see how smooth and fair-talkin' he kin be when it suits him."

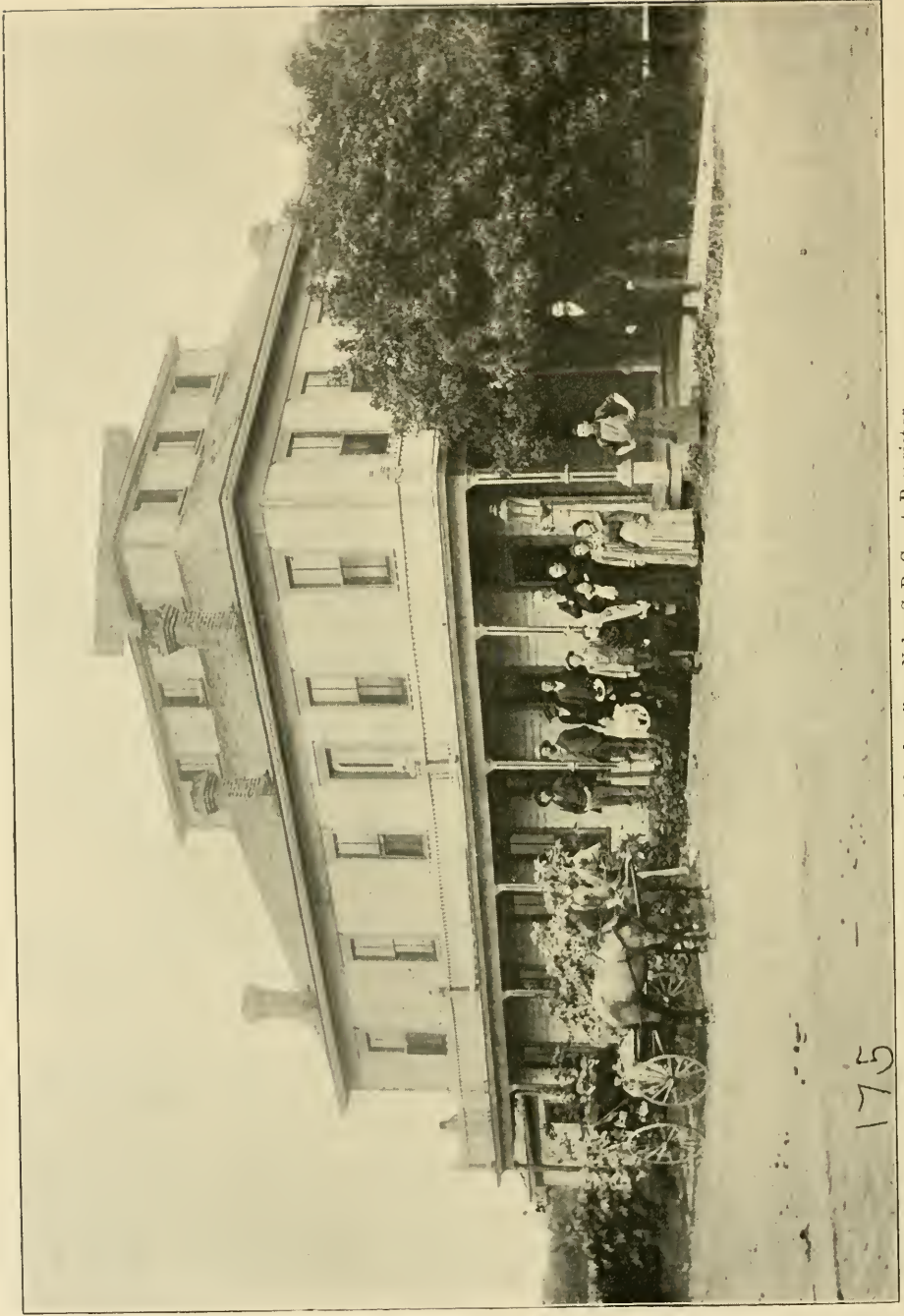
"Well, I can't see where Penn was to blame for keeping a sheep ranch, nor why he should not resent the intrusion of the big man on his claim."

"I see, sir, that ye don't catch onto the situation. Ye see the cattle men had fenced in about fifteen square miles for a pasture so as not to have to herd their stock, and Penn and a few other fellers had the cheek to go right into that pasture and take up claims. As soon as they did that a lot of other fellers follered suit, and the big pasture was soon busted up, as them settlers went out and cut about fifteen miles of wire fence in one single night."

"I see; but what about the big man and Penn?"

"Well, the big feller he wouldn't hear to it, but swore he was goin' to stay, anyway. Then Penn he up and said: 'Say, mister, I see you have a watch; I want you to set it with mine. It is just half past 11 o'clock. Now you go back to your wagon and don't speak to me again. I want my dinner and I suppose you want yours, and if you are on this place at ten minutes after 1 o'clock, in just five minutes after that either you or me will be in h—.' You see Penn intended to shoot the contest off with the feller. That's a way he has of settlin' such disputes. Well, the feller he went back to his wagon.





Globe Hotel, Broken Bow, Neb. S. P. Great, Proprietor.

got his Winchester and set down on the wagon tongue to wait for Penn to commence the shootin'. Penn went over to his sod house, which was located on the north side of a draw called Spring creek, but it hain't got no water in it except when it rains real hard. He got his dinner and then commenced to load his gun, appearin' calm like, but I guess he was hopin' all the time that the big feller'd get scairt and git out of thar before 1 o'clock. Well, the feller didn't git worth a cent, but jest kept on a-settin' thar a-watchin' Penn out of the corner of his eye. Penn finally come out on the prairie and set down a little ways from the house with his gun across his lap, just as unconcerned as if shootin' folks was an everyday occurrence."

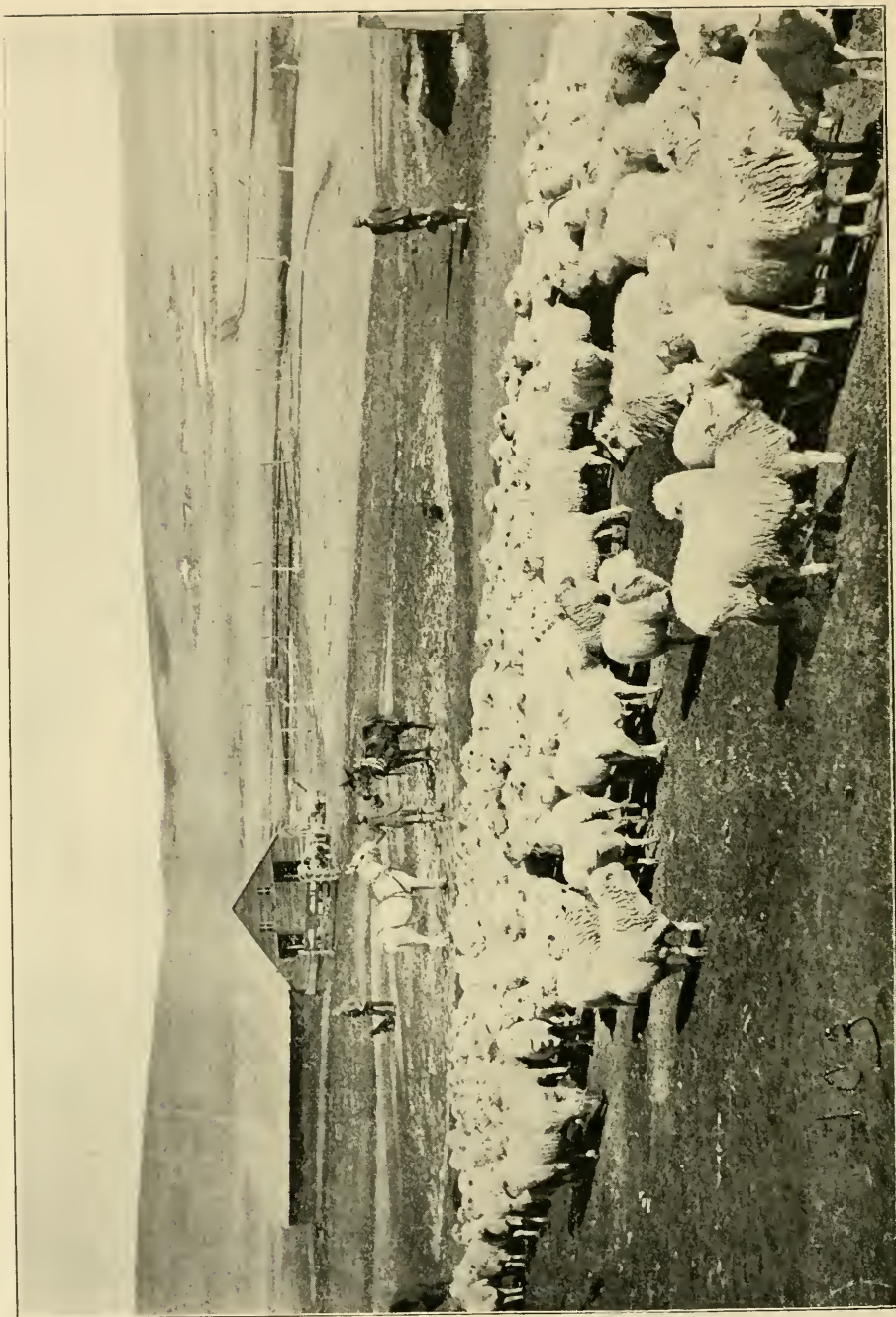
"Well, what effect did that have on the big fellow?"

"I'm ashamed ter tell ye what a coward that there big feller was. Of course Penn acted kinder bold and that bluffed the feller, and he concluded that the claim wasn't wuth kickin' up a fuss about, and jest about five minutes before the shootin' was to open up he hitched his mules onto his wagon and pulled out."

While the foregoing conversation was going on the participants did not notice a small, dark-eyed man sitting on the seat immediately behind them, who appeared to take it all in, and smiled occasionally as the dialogue proceeded. His companion, a lady, seemed greatly annoyed by the talk, and the small, black-eyed man said something in an undertone that caused her to arise and take a seat in another part of the car, while he settled back in his seat to listen to the braggart filling the old man with yarns about the bad people of Custer county, especially the sheriff.

"I can't say," resumed the old man, "but that I admire a man who is willing to fight to save his home."

"Yes, that's all right; but this man Penn has bin up to lots of meanness. He got inter a quarrel with some fellers one day and one of 'em laid fer him with a gun, and fired two shots over his head jest to scare him. What does Penn do but up and fired straight at the feller, and would have killed him if it hadn't ben fer Penn's bullet goin' right inter the feller's gun barrel, where it lodged so tight he had ter have it bored out. Only a few days ago a couple of cowboys was in a little town up the line a few miles from Broken Bow, havin' a little fun paintin' the town, as the boys call it, and makin' fellers dance by shootin' at their feet, and other innocent amusements. Some of the citizens sent for Penn and he come up and shot 'em both from behind a house, never givin' 'em the ghost of a show fer their lives. The cattle men was so mad it would only needed some one to say, 'Come on boys,' to had a gang go down from the sand hills and wipe Anselmo off'n the map of the universe and Penn along with it."



P. Richardson's Sheep Ranch, north of Broken Bow.

103



"It's a wonder a man like that don't get killed."

"You bet he'll get a dose some of these days. I'd do it myself if I had a good chance."

"Do you know him when you see him? I would like to have you point him out when we get to Broken Bow."

Know him! Well I should think I did. The man that lives in Custer county and don't know Charlie Penn must be a tenderfoot, sure. He's mostly allus at the depot when the trains gits in, seein' if there's any fellers gittin' off there's a reward offered for, and I'll show him ter ye."

As the train approached Ansley the young man settled back in his seat and prepared to enjoy his quid of tobacco. Shortly after the train pulled out of the last named station the little black-eyed man behind him tapped him on the shoulder and invited him to take a seat facing his own. Looking him square in the eye, the black-eyed man said:

"I take it from your conversation that you live in Custer county."

"Yep," replied the red-headed man; shifting his quid to the opposite side of his mouth.

"Now, young man, you have been making some very serious charges against the sheriff of your county, in regard to that Anselmo affair, and they don't tally with the sworn statements of men on the ground at the time."

"I don't care what they swore to; I was thar at the time and know he didn't even call on 'em ter halt."

"Supposing Penn was to come into this car now, would you shoot him?"

"Wouldn't like any better fun."

The black-eyed man looked at him sharply for a moment.

"Young man, you are talking to Penn, and you know you are a consummate liar." Then whipping out a huge 44 revolver he continued: "You are a cowardly, dirty, low-lived puppy. Now, you pusillanimous, lantern-jawed, big-mouthed wind-bag, pull out your gun and shoot away. I will fill your hide so full of holes that it wouldn't make a good sieve and throw your worthless carcass out of the car window."

The braggart swallowed his quid of tobacco with a gulp, dropped his jaw and sat in his seat limp and speechless, and as white as a ghost.

"Come, you knock-kneed son of a gun, are you going to shoot?" roared the sheriff.

The fellow recovered his power of speech sufficiently to gasp a faint "N-u-n-o sir."

"Then get out of this car; we can dispense with your company."

He needed no second invitation, and as his coat tails disappeared through the door leading into the smoker, Penn gave one of his low, guttural laughs.



and the passengers who had gathered around expecting to see some fun, resumed their seats. The old man reached out his hand and took Penn's, saying: "Mr. Penn, I am glad to make your acquaintance. I have heard you are a pretty tough man, but I guess you are not as bad as I have been led to believe."

"Ha! ha! ha!" replied Penn, with his peculiar guttural laugh: "I thought I would just scare that fellow, and I guess I did it all right."

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## Westerville.

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(By Miss Floy Leech.)

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In 1879 Mr. Westervelt took the land upon which Westerville now stands as a homestead, built his house, a little soddy, on the west bank of Clear creek. His was the first building in Westerville. The next year, 1880, Seneca, a small village, was moved on Mr. Westervelt's land and the name was changed to Westerville in honor of the owner. Mr. Westervelt also edited a paper, the Western Echo, which some years afterward was sold to parties who lived in Ansley, and the name was changed to the Ansley Chronicle. A son of Mr. Westervelt is now editor of the Scott's Bluffs Republican, published at Scotts Bluffs, Nebraska. The county seat of Scotts Bluffs county, Gering, was also named after one of the early settlers of Westerville, who moved to that county. Fifteen years ago Westerville was the principal town in Custer county, as it was situated in the eastern part where most of the settlements were made, and it had a considerable trade. Clear creek flows along the north and east sides, but why it was named "Clear" creek I never knew, for it has been muddy ever since I saw it, some sixteen years ago. On the north bank of Clear creek is the flouring mill, operated by water power. Several years ago, in the '80s, we had very heavy rain storms during the spring, dangerously raising Clear creek. The water worked its way under the banks and caused great pieces of earth to cave into the water. The people feared that some of the buildings nearest the bank would be undermined. The flouring mill stood so close to the water that men had to work night and day to save it. One man standing on the bank happened to look behind him and saw the ground cracking all around; he had scarcely time to escape when that portion upon which he had stood dropped into the water below.

The first frame church in the county was built at Westerville. The lum-

ber was transported from Grand Island, a distance of eighty miles. Our nearest railroad stations in those days were Grand Island and Kearney. The first church bell in Custer county was hung in the Methodist church at this place. It had been there but a short time when, as it proclaimed liberty to the world at Westerville, its fate was like that of the old Liberty bell. A few



MISS FLOY LEECH.

years ago it was taken from Westerville by some one who wanted it as a relic, but the people caused it to be promptly returned. It now reposes in the parsonage yard, filled with soil in which during the summer season beautiful blossoms grow to delight the eye of the passer by, and to cheer the heart of the pastor when he is weary. It was not made to be unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air. Its mission is somewhat changed from that for which its founders intended it, but it is still serving a useful purpose, and who shall say that it was made in vain? A new bell took its place in the belfry long ago. Rev. Brooks was the first regular minister at Westerville, and Elder Hale, of the Orleans district, in western Nebraska, was one of our early preachers.

The reason Westerville is not the county seat of Custer county, we are told, is because the first settlers were not willing to make a sacrifice of about one hundred dollars deemed necessary to secure this distinction, and while Westerville slumbered and felt secure, Broken Bow worked and soon won the prize. This was mistake number one for Westerville.

Two county fairs were held here, one in 1883 and the other in 1884. I

attended the one in 1884, and remember seeing two things which interested me very much; a turtle that had been taken from Clear creek and a fawn that was captured a few miles north of here. The turtle was nearly as large as a washtub in which it was exhibited. A number of the people of Broken Bow attended the fair in 1884. The question: "Where shall the county fair be held next year?" was submitted to the people, and when the votes were counted it was found that Westerville had lost the privilege of having it, which she never regained. Mistake number two for Westerville.

In Westerville's most prosperous days we had several dry goods and grocery stores, a large hardware store over which was a public hall, three hotels, a flouring mill, two blacksmith shops, a cutlery store, a good public library, a bank that carried on quite an extensive business, printing offices, a drug store, and a good school and church. We could boast of two doctors, Waterbury and Morris. J. A. Armour, now county judge, was our lawyer. We are proud to say that we have never had a licensed saloon in our town. In the summer of 1880, as the Fourth of July drew near, the people of Westerville were desirous of celebrating the day. Mr. Westervelt had a red cedar log which he said he would give for a liberty pole, but it was not long enough, and Mr. Baker was patriotic enough to go to the cedar canons and get another. The two were spliced together and raised so that "Old Glory" waved above the people upon that eventful day. The pole now stands in the middle of the main street, which was named Loraine, in honor of Mrs. Westervelt. The flag rope has been lost or taken within the past few years, so that since then no flag has been flung to the breeze from the old liberty pole during late celebrations of our natal day. But not only flags have fluttered from the top of this pole, for the people were awakened one morning following hallowe'en, and wondered why one of the neighbor's geese had been hung up there until it was limp and dead.

During the winter of 1880 a lady went visiting. Her hostess had nothing in the house to cook for dinner, until one of the boys caught a rabbit, and some wheat was ground in the coffee mill. With stewed rabbit and bread made of the ground wheat a very good dinner was prepared. Some of the people were compelled to go to bed while their children were at school in order to save fuel, which could not be gotten. Those who were here during that winter know something of the hardships of pioneer life. Still, the hardy pioneers say that after all, such good will prevailed among the settlers that it was really an enjoyable time. When the weather finally became better a man living north of here went to Grand Island for a load of flour. He never reached Westerville with it, for the people went to meet him and bought it all except a little which he kept for himself. Thus these people made sure of

something to eat. At one of the early weddings the bride's mother wanted to appear stylish; so she informed her husband that he must present the bride to the bridegroom. When the critical moment came, after being reminded of his duty two or three times by his better half, he took the daughter by the hand, crossed the room, and, swinging towards the young man the arm that



View of the Westerville Mill and Mill Pond.

held her hand, said: "Here." This done, he considered that he had done the thing up in style, and left the room, and when search was made for him he was found in front of his store with his hands full of crackers which he had promised to the winner of a wrestling match which he was watching between two urchins.

We have always had a good school, although we have never had but the one room. The first term was taught in an empty building in the western part of the town. Then a frame school house was built on a hillside in the southwestern part of town, where school has since been conducted. Of late years we have studied all of the branches that are taken in the high school at Broken Bow. One of the Westerville pupils, L. L. Thomas, became quite a noted evangelist. Many of the students have become teachers and are among the best in the county. The first teacher's institute in Custer county was held at Westerville in 1881. There was no place for the meeting, but permission was obtained to use Blowers' warehouse for that purpose. The warehouse was afterwards converted into a livery barn. Before the next teacher's institute was held the school house was built and they used that. They also held the meetings there the two following years.



The mill pond is a source of much pleasure to our citizens, affording skating in the winter and boating in the summer.

When the B. & M. railroad went through to the Black Hills a majority of the people of Westerville moved to Ansley, a station eight miles south which furnished better business advantages. Thus Westerville was left a little country village. Traveling men used to call it the "Sleeping Beauty." Yet it is hardly asleep. Another name has been proposed from the number of flowers that spring spontaneously from its fertile soil.

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## Hunting Wild Horses.

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Dan Haskell.

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A correspondent of the Chicago Drovers' Journal says: "I have seen the stag hunt in Scotland and the steeple chase in Ireland, but compared with a wild horse hunt on the Haskell & Co. ranch in Nebraska, these are tame sports."

In the summer of 1884 we had a herd of 600 horses on our ranch. One evening about sundown we were driving them across a small bridge, when they became frightened and commenced to run. This raised a dense cloud of dust, which added to the fright of the animals, causing them to stampede, breaking through a fence on either side and killing five of them, the balance of the herd flying in every direction in to the hills. During the night they became mixed up with a herd of wild horses of which there were large numbers roaming over this country at that time. One would naturally suppose that a wild horse could outstrip his domesticated brother in a long race, but in separating our stampeded herd from the wild ones we discovered that such is not the case. The domesticated horse, being better bred, proved to have superior powers of endurance. As the wild horse has long ago disappeared from Custer county, a short description of his habits and the manner of hunting may be interesting to the reader.

Wild horses roamed over the prairie in small bands, each led by a stallion, who was the head of the family. The first business of the hunter was to shoot these band stallions, which would cause the mares and colts of that family to unite themselves with another band. By repeating the operation of shooting the leading stallions quite a bunch of horses would soon be gathered together,

the object being to chase as many down at once as possible. Having gone thus far, the work of the hunter has just begun. When pursued, we found that wild horses always traveled in a circle, and that they would eventually get back to the place from which they started. After getting a bunch of the required size together by shooting the stallions as described, our next move



J. D. HASKELL.



J. D. Haskell's first residence on South Loup.

was to establish camps along the course we concluded the animals would run, with a man at each station to take care of the saddle horse, which were used in relays. Two men, well mounted, then started the herd of wild horses and crowded them to their utmost limit, giving them time to neither eat nor rest until they were completely run down and would permit themselves to be corraled. It usually took about five days of constant motion to accomplish this, although sometimes a herd would succumb in two or three days. Whenever we reached a relay camp our saddle horses were changed, thus keeping the wild horses on the constant move day and night. The long race generally broke the old ones down so that they were seldom of any use afterwards, but the young ones seemed little the worse for their chase after a few days' rest.

Occasionally we would start a bunch led by an old stallion that would, when pushed hard, start out and run for fifty miles in one direction, taking us away from our camps altogether and compelling us often to ride a hundred miles without a change of horses. At intervals in the chase one or more of the wild horses would drop back, not able to keep up with the flying herd.

These were always roped, thrown and hobbled, so that we could return and get them after the main bunch had been run down. We had a one-armed man on our ranch by the name of Jim Hunnell, who could rope and hobble a wild horse with the best of them. With one end of his lariat tied to the horn of his saddle, he would take the bridle rein in his teeth, and, holding the coil and loop both in his one hand, would catch and throw his horse every time, putting on the hobbles by using his hand and teeth. Those who have tried to rope a wild horse and hobble him with two good hands will appreciate the work done by Jim Hunnell. The most favorable time to chase wild horses was when there was snow on the ground, as we could then follow the trail much easier during the night. We carried small, dark lanterns with us, to be used when it would be impossible to follow the trail without them. We would sometimes be caught by a blizzard in the middle of a chase and be obliged to give up and get back to the camp as best he could. In February, 1883, my brother and myself started out to catch a small bunch of eleven horses headed by a fine roan stallion. One of the neighbors had been catching the colts for two seasons. We had six good saddle horses with us, expecting to locate them at two different points along the course we thought the wild horses would take, but when we reached our friend's house he said he had chased the bunch several times and they took a circle only of ten or twelve miles, so we left our extra horses at his place and set out with but one feed of corn and a lunch in our pockets. We soon located the herd, and away they went like the wind, the fine old roan stallion in the lead. When the old fellow found out that some one was after him that meant business he struck off on a tangent at the top of his speed in a southwesterly direction. Late in the afternoon we struck the North Platte valley northwest of Ogallala. The roan then changed his course to northwest, and traveled at such a killing gait that had it not been for the snow on the ground we would hardly have been able to follow him. As we neared the B. & M. railroad the snow became quite deep and after the darkness came on we lighted our lanterns and followed the trail without any trouble. At about 3 o'clock in the morning we concluded to stop and give our saddle horses a rest, as they had been ridden hard all day and night, except when we had stopped to feed them the corn and to eat our lunch. We scraped a little round place in the snow, which was twelve inches deep, and lay down on the frozen ground together, holding our horses by the bridle reins. We were so cold that our teeth chattered together, while our horses stood and shivered. As soon as daylight appeared we arose from our downy bed and rode up to the top of a high bluff, from which we discerned the wild horses huddled up in a small valley with their heads down, taking a much-needed rest. Hearing the bark of a dog, we proceeded in that direction and came to

the ranch of Carl Gross, southwest of Lakeside, where we remained that day and the following night. We were both snow blind. Early the next morning we took up the trail of the horses and followed them back to the place from which they had started. We procured fresh saddle horses, set out after them again, and two days later had the entire bunch in a corral at our home ranch. While in pursuit of this roan band, we sighted another herd of fourteen, headed by a fine brown horse, and next month gave them chase and had them corraled in two days. This was our last horse hunt.

Wild horses have almost entirely disappeared from Nebraska, although it is said there are still a few small bands in the vicinity of Blue river. The writer has seen hundreds of them on Tallin Table in Custer county, and it was a grand sight to see the fat, sleek fellows watering at the pools which stood there as late as the month of June, each leader herding his family to keep it from mixing with other bands.

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To show how wild Custer county was in the early days we give the following incident: We drove up to a settler's house to make a picture of it, with the family group in front. Before we could get the camera focused, one of the children, a lad of seven or eight years, made a break for the tall grass that was growing about three feet high in the vicinity, and hid. The balance of the family hunted for him about a quarter of an hour while we stood patiently awaiting the round-up in the boiling hot sun. They were unsuccessful in their search, and returned to have the group taken without him. Just as we were about ready to make the exposure, away went another of the boys, which resulted in another hunt and another failure. Then the old man got mad and said: "Take what you've got." I secured six of the children and the two old people. Two of them got away for sure, and how many more I did not stop to figure out, but left that for the parents when they counted noses.

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## Lynching of Kid Wade in 1884.

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### CHAPTER I.

The story which leads up to the lynching of Kid Wade, the horsethief, opens at the Custer county fair, which is in progress at Broken Bow in the fall of 1883. It is the last day of the show and the Pulliam race horse has



made such a fine record that the owner is besieged by sports all anxious to procure the wonderful animal. Mr. Pulliam finally sells the horse to John Carney. On the same day a gentlemanly-appearing young man stopped at Pulliam's place at West Union for dinner. He was a pretty smooth talker and soon led Pulliam's son, Ed, into a discussion of the good points of his father's horses, especially the racer. When he left the stranger told young Pulliam that he was going to Jack Roath's, about six miles distant, to collect some money that Roath owed him for some ponies. It was discovered later that



Jack Roath's first Residence in West Union Tp.

this story was a fabrication. The stranger had been at Roath's the previous night, and had sold one pony to an employe of Roath's, receiving pay for the same, but that was all. Instead he went to James Abernathy's.

The young man returned to Pulliam's on Sunday following and gave his name as Sam Gordon, representing that he was by profession a bronco buster. The boys on the place, with a number from neighboring ranches, who were there at the time, led out a particularly wild and vicious bronco and invited the stranger to give an exhibition of his prowess. Nothing loath, Gordon vaulted into the saddle and shouted: "Let 'er go!" and go she did—straight up into the air as if shot from a catapult, her head down between her forelegs and her back arched in the shape of a rainbow. While poised in midair she performed a series of movements too complicated for description, reversed end, and came down with her four feet in a bunch, jarring the earth and nearly knocking the teeth out of her rider. Without stopping to take a

breathing spell this acrobatic feat was repeated again and again, each time embellished with a variety of contortions, the plucky rider keeping his saddle and rising in the stirrups to break the terrific shock that terminated each descent. Finally, out of sheer exhaustion, the bronco, finding that she had met her master, desisted and stood still, panting, quivering in every muscle, and covered with foam, while Gordon sat in the saddle as cool as a cucumber and smiling like a morning in May. The young man was the recipient of lavish compliments from the witnesses of this exhibition of skill, which was considered a great accomplishment in those days. Gordon's own horse was a fairly good animal, although somewhat ridden down, and he struck a trade with the boys by which he came into possession of the bucking mare and \$25 to boot. The next morning he rode up the river about six miles, where he sold the pony to Perry Lytle, and, taking his saddle, said he was going to wait at the Walworth bridge for the stage, and he was not again seen in the vicinity.

The day after this episode Mr. Pulliam missed a fine saddle horse named Frank, which had been taken out of a stall in his stable, where he had been in the habit of keeping the race horse previously referred to. He came to the conclusion that the thief had supposed he was getting the racer, but that animal had been taken home by his new owner, John Carney. It was then discovered that one of Will Sargent's ponies was missing, and Jack Roath reported that he had lost a good work team and a pony, making in all five horses that had mysteriously disappeared from the neighborhood.

Roath followed the trail of the thief who had taken his horses to the North Loup river and there lost it. He went on up the river as far as North-up's ranch, and thence to Ainsworth, eighty-five miles from home. At Ainsworth he learned that the rough country along the Niobrara river was infested with horse and cattle thieves who had their hiding places in the dense pine timber that grew along that stream and in the adjacent canons. Roath continued his search to Long Pine, where he was told by Ed. Burch that Pulliam and Elmer Sweet, from West Union, had been there a short time before and had gone on to O'Neill. Burch accompanied Roath to the latter city, where they found Pulliam and Sweet.

In the meantime two farmers, Barney Crowell and John Grimet, had found the trail of the stolen horses on the north side of the North Loup river, near where Roath had lost it, and they followed it until they struck the Calamus, where they came suddenly upon the thief. In this predicament they discovered that they were unarmed, and there was nothing for them to do but to return home, leaving the outlaw unmolested.

Pulliam, Sweet and Roath, after resting themselves and horses at O'Neill,

started home. They passed the night at Swan lake, quite a large and deep body of water. In the morning, as they were about to resume their journey, they saw a boy herding a bunch of about 300 cattle, and they asked the boy to drive the cattle in the lake so that they could see them swim. The boy complied and the herd was soon in the water, where, being urged on by the boy and the men, they swam out, headed for the opposite shore. The wind was blowing quite a gale, dashing waves in the faces of the leaders, and they turned around to get back to land. This confused the rest of the herd and the whole bunch commenced to swim around in a circle. Fright was soon added to their bewilderment, and in a short time the scene was one which beggars description. The frightened and maddened animals became a rolling, surging, boiling mass, churning the muddy water into foam in frantic efforts to climb upon each other's backs to escape drowning, while their bellowings contributed to the general pandemonium. The men looked on with a species of fascination, riveted to the spot; then realizing that they had been the cause of the catastrophe, they put spurs to their horses and fled, the deafening roar and bellowing of the struggling brutes ringing in their ears all the way to their homes, but were greatly relieved soon afterward to learn that the cattle had come out of the lake in good shape without the loss of a single one.

Upon their arrival home, Pulliam and Roath decided to prosecute their search for the man who had stolen their property. They did not care so much for the value of the horses as they did for the principle of the thing. The idea that a strip of a boy could come down from the sand hills and take five horses out of Custer county at his sweet will was not to be entertained for a moment. They immediately fitted up a wagon with provisions and other necessities for a journey through the wilderness, and with several good saddle horses, set out once more. The first night found them at T. S. Northup's ranch, twelve miles west of Brewster, on the North Loup river. This ranch is one of the oldest and best known landmarks in that part of the country. Mr. Northup located in the southern part of Custer county in 1878, but soon afterwards moved to the ranch in Blaine county which bears his name.

From Northup's Pulliam and Roath went up Goose creek in a north-westerly direction, having been joined by a farmer by the name of E. D. Oldham. They reached Valentine, where the sheriff informed them that the old man, Wade, and the two Belzador boys had passed through town a few days before with a small bunch of horses, and from Pulliam's description the sheriff thought the Sargent and Roath ponies, at least, were among them. A consultation was held and it was decided to keep on in pursuit of the thieves. Roath was sick from exposure to the weather, which had turned very cold, and the horse he rode left tracks of blood in the light snow that covered the

ground. But these men were inured to hardships from a long life on the frontier, and were not to be disheartened by small difficulties. They left Valentine on the trail of Wade and his companions and proceeded without incident until they came to John Shores' ranch on the Niobrara river, about thirty-five miles from Valentine. Here Roath grew worse and had to lay over to recruit, while the other two kept up the chase as far as the Rolling Springs ranch. Having neither sighted nor heard of the thieves, they concluded that the chase was almost hopeless and retraced their steps to Shore's, where they found Roath much worse. Oldham was sent to Valentine for a doctor, but not being able to procure one, he purchased some medicine and returned to Shore's, where he found poor Roath in a delirium, raving about horse thieves, drowning cattle and irrelevant subjects of all kinds. Pulliam thought it best to return and send Mrs. Roath to her husband, as it was thought he would die. He recovered, however, and believes to this day that his life was saved by the care he received from his nurse, Mrs. Shores, whose husband is now a retired cattle man and ex-senator, and who has a beautiful home at Valentine, Nebraska.

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## CHAPTER II.

It is a wild, bleak day. The thermometer registers almost zero and a dense bank of dark clouds in the northwest portends one of those dreaded storms prevalent in Nebraska known as blizzards. A covered wagon is toiling slowly along in a northwesterly direction against a heavy head wind which comes in fitful gusts that threaten at times to overturn it. The occupants of the wagon are a man and a woman, and they have traveled for several days through a wilderness of interminable sand hills and through intervening valleys where icy lakes obstructed their progress by compelling them to make large detours. It has been a scene of dreary desolation and monotony that establishes the claim that this part of Nebraska is a part of the Great American Desert. Not a tree nor even a shrub has been seen to relieve the awful sameness of the scene since they left the North Loup river, and the only signs of life they have seen on the way have been an occasional jack rabbit or wolf. When in camp during the night the solitude has been intensified by the demoniacal howl of packs of hungry coyotes from the tops of the surrounding hills. But the scene suddenly changes and the wagon comes to a standstill on the brink of a canon that seems to be a barrier to their further progress. At the bottom of this cleft in the earth the Snake river winds in and out among rocks and pine trees like a thread of silver. The jagged and almost perpendicular sides of the canon, rock-ribbed and seamed by the elemental war



of ages, are softened somewhat by pine trees which shoot out of crevices skyward to a height in some cases of seventy-five feet. It is one of the most romantic and picturesque landscapes in Nebraska, and our travelers gaze up and down long and earnestly, not so much to admire the beauties of nature here bestowed with lavish hand, as to discover whether there be any means of gaining the opposite side of the cleft. Away to the northeast they discern what appears to be a road hewn out of the rock, twisting around huge boulders and dragging its serpentine length up the steep sides of the canon until it emerges on the table land on the other side.

"Isn't this the place Orlando described to us, below the mouth of Steer creek, and east of the falls a few miles, Axtell?"

"Yes, ma'am, I think it is, and I've struck a kind of a trail leadin' down the river, and if I am not mistaken the crossin' is about a mile from here. We can't get there none to soon, neither, for I think we're goin' to have a blizzard, and I'm not stuck on bein' caught out here in one of them things. When we get acrost this miserable river it won't take us long to make Shores' ranch."

The reader may have guessed that the lady passenger in the covered wagon is none other than Mrs. Veshta Roath on her long and tedious journey to the bedside of her sick husband. What suffering, what privation, will a noble woman not make for the man she loves?

"Gee-whiz! did you ever see sich a road as that?" exclaims the driver, as they come in sight of the crossing. "Whoa, Jane! I'll have to tie all the wheels, or the wagon'll git to the bottom afore the horses. Mrs. Roath, it's a good twenty rod to the bottom of this canon; d'ye think you can hang on while we're fallin' down?"

"I'll try, John. I know you are a good driver and I'm sure we ought to get down safely if the ranchmen can haul logs up the same road out of the canon."

"Then let 'er go," answers John, as they tilt over the edge of the precipice into the narrow groove that winds into the depths of the defile. Mrs. Roath grasps hold of the bows of the wagon cover, while the driver braces his feet against the end board to prevent himself from being precipitated onto the haunches of his team.

"Whoa, there, Jane! Steady now, Bill! By Jimminy, this beats all the roads I ever see, and if any thief ever steals a horse of mine and escapes into this country he needn't think I'll ever foller him."

They reach the bottom without accident, and have no difficulty in finding the ford, which they cross and begin the ascent of the other side. They accomplish the climb in safety and emerge upon the level table land above.

The snow is falling thick and fast and is driven against the faces of the travelers with a stinging force that makes them wince. A discussion ensues as to the advisability of pursuing the journey, but as their team is almost exhausted and night is at hand, they seek the kindly shelter of a solitary haystack that is seen a short distance away and prepare to pass the night as best they can. The horses are unhitched and attended to, and a very passable meal is prepared from an ample store of cooked victuals in the wagon. Having an abundant supply of robes and blankets, they wrap themselves up and pass the night in tolerable comfort. They made an early start in the morning, the storm having subsided, but the traveling being heavy through the snow they did not reach Shores' until 5 o'clock in the evening. Mr. Roath had taken a turn for the better, after thirteen days of raving. A doctor had been procured before the arrival of Mrs. Roath, and the patient was on the fair way to recovery. In a few weeks he was able to get up, when they returned to their home in Custer county.

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### CHAPTER III.

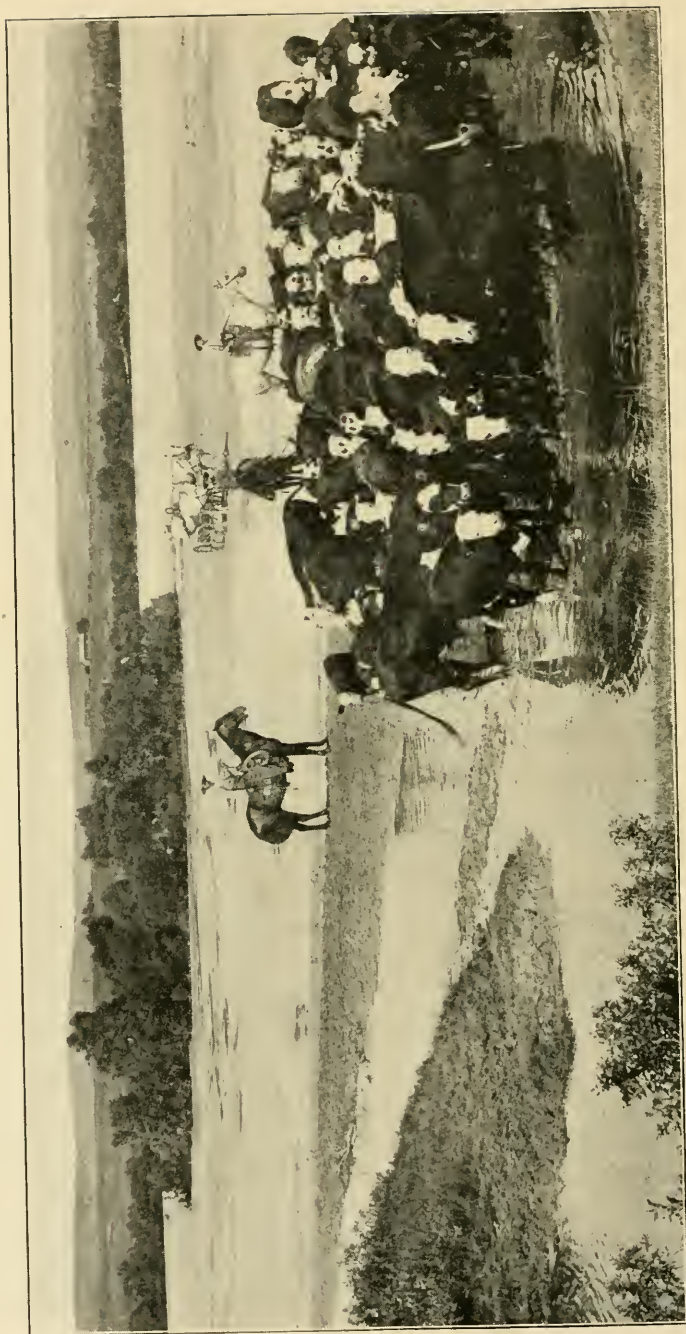
In January, 1884, following the events related in the preceding chapters, Pulliam and Roath had been corresponding with parties in the northern part of the state with a view to getting some trace of the stolen horses. Among the replies received was the following from a place called Carn's Bridge, in Brown county:

Mr. Roath—We have two horses here which answer to the description of your work horses.

(Signed)

CAP. BURNHAM, Vigilance Committee.

Roath proceeded to the place named and was informed by Burnham that the bay horse had been sold by Kid Wade to Frank Ellison, who lived at Keya Paha, and that the black mare had been sold to Henry Brockman. The vigilantes had taken both of the horses and had possession of them at the time the letter was written to Roath, but they had subsequently been replevined by Ellison and Brockman. Roath was induced to have Brockman arrested as an accomplice of Kid Wade, who, thinking he was about to be hanged as a horsethief, compromised by delivering up the horse and paying \$35 to help pay the expenses of the vigilantes. They then went up to Keya Paha and got Roath's bay horse, and after leaving there thought it would be a good plan to return and hang Ellison and see if he would not tell where Kid Wade was secreted. But Ellison got wind of their intention and made his escape. An exciting race ensued, with the vigilantes close at Ellison's heels, but he



Cattle Scene on the Middle Loup River at Millburn, Neb., on the Ranch of C. A. Snyder.

having shoes on his horse, was able to ride down the bed of a frozen creek, take a short cut and get away from his pursuers. During his stay in Brown county Roath spent ten days with this band of eighteen vigilantes trying to run down Kid Wade and his accomplices. A description of their method of working may be of interest to the reader who did not live here when "Judge Lynch" had a monopoly of the hanging industry.

When the vigilantes found a man whom they suspected of knowing anything of the gang they would hang him up until he began to choke, then let him down and question him. If he proved stubborn they gave him another lift and were not always particular to let him down in time. Upon one occasion they got hold of a man named Allen who was suspected of being pretty close to the thieves. They took him to a barn, adjusted the noose about his neck and then called upon him to tell what he knew about Kid Wade. He protested that he knew nothing about Kid Wade, whereupon they kicked out the box from under him and let him dangle in the air about the proper time. When they let him down he fell to the ground limp and apparently lifeless. He was laid alongside the barn by his executioners, who seemed to think it quite a joke. When they returned half an hour later to get the body they discovered that the corpse had fled. Allen had regained his senses during their absence and cleared out to prevent a second hanging. Upon another occasion they had corraled in the postoffice at Carn's Bridge a very innocent and harmless-appearing young man of about twenty years of age, who did not appear to have any more fight in him than a rabbit, but who was supposed to know something about the outlaws and their haunts. How to get him out of the postoffice where they could catch him was a question. They sent a messenger in who told the young man that Jim Smith wanted to see him outside, but the youth apparently understood who wanted to see him and replied: "You tell those fellows out there that they can't run any blazers on me; if they've got any business with me let them come inside." Upon the delivery of this ultimatum by the messenger the vigilantes held a consultation and then rushed into the postoffice in a body with their guns presented and cocked. In a second the leader had the muzzle of a double-barreled gun within six inches of the young man's body and had ordered him to throw up his hands. The innocent looking young man obeyed, but his right hand went up with a 44 Colt's revolver in it, which tickled the end of the vigilante's nose before he knew what had happened.

"Now shoot if you want to," he coolly remarked, "but if you do, I'll shoot first."

The two men stood glaring at each other, toying with the triggers of their weapons, and the room was as still as death for several minutes. Re-



volvers clicked here and there, and word was passed around that they could kill him where he stood.

"Yes, you can, but if you do you will be a set of cowards, and if you do, I'll get this man first."

The situation was dramatic and promised to become tragic. The men well knew that they could send eighteen fatal bullets into the young man's body, but they also knew that before one of them reached him a bullet from his revolver would penetrate the heart of their leader. The vigilantes were in a most embarrassing predicament, and much as they disliked it, had to back out of the room leaving the young man master of the situation. The next day Roath was expressing his admiration for the boy's pluck, which somewhat nettled the vigilantes, and they gave him to understand that he had better not refer to the subject again in their presence. That afternoon they met an old gray-headed farmer whom they suspected of being able to give some of the information they sought, and they inquired of him if he knew where Jim Smith was.

"If you want Jim Smith, why in h— don't you go and find him?"

Eighteen guns were instantly leveled at the old man and several bullets whizzed so closely past his head that he was almost scared to death. The vigilantes sent two men to a place about three miles distant to get a rope, which they were to take to a clump of trees not far distant. While waiting for the men to return with the rope, the sheriff of Brown county drove up. He was a neighbor of the old man and he prevailed upon the vigilantes to let him go. The vigilantes finally found Jim Smith, took him to a convenient place, adjusted the rope and then said:

"Jim, we want you to tell us where Kid Wade is hiding."

"Don't know anything about Kid Wade," growled Jim.

"Up with him, boys; we haven't got any time to fool away with horse thieves. When I count three, pull. One—two—"

"Hold on, fellers!" cries Smith. "I'll tell if you don't hang me, and if you'll promise never to tell who gave the Kid away."

"All right; but be careful to tell nothing but the truth, or you may not get off so easy the next time we catch you."

"Well, I don't like the Kid very well, anyhow. You'll find him at Lemars, Iowa."

Three men were sent to Lemars to have Wade arrested, the vigilantes meanwhile continuing their work of running down others of the band in Brown county. Sheriff John Ennis of Lemars, and his deputy, Kirk Elder, who now reside at Anselmo, Custer county, Nebraska, made the arrest. When apprehended Wade had in his possession Pulliam's saddle horse, Frank. The

prisoner was turned over to a Nebraska sheriff, but in some mysterious way he fell into the hands of the vigilantes, who took him to Brush Creek and kept him there ten days and plied him with questions. They gave him to understand that he would be delivered over to the authorities, while at the same time they had a canon, and even the tree, picked out to hang him on.

The people of Long Pine had raised quite a large sum of money to help rid the country of outlaws, and the vigilantes concluded to take Wade to that city and exhibit him. Hundreds of people came in to see the show and Wade appeared to enjoy the notoriety he had achieved immensely. He would see some young fellow approaching to look at him and would ask the guard his name. When the young man came up the Kid would say: "Hello, Sam; how are you?" Of course Sam would respond to his name, wondering how the Kid came to know it.

"Say, Sam, where have you been the past year? Don't know me? Why, of course you do. Don't you remember the time we stole that bunch of ponies down on the Platte river three years ago?"

The fellow would grow indignant and deny all knowledge of the Kid or his pony deal. This was great fun for the Kid, who always insisted that he could not be mistaken. He came very near getting his head shot off one day by a young man who could not see any fun in that kind of a joke.

At this place he turned Pulliam's horse, Frank, over to Roath, to be taken back to his owner, telling him to take good care of him, as he might be down after him again. He manifested great affection for this animal, and before Roath left gave an exhibition of a number of tricks that he had taught old Frank. It seemed almost incredible that he could have taught the horse so much in the short space of five months.

From Long Pine Wade was taken to Bassett, a small station on the Elkhorn railroad, and on the night of February 8, 1884, he was left in an old store building in charge of two guards. At midnight a band of masked men appeared, took him away from the guards and hanged him to a telegraph pole. Word went out that Wade had been hanged by some of his pals to keep him from squealing on them. Be that as it may, nobody seemed interested in the matter sufficiently to make an investigation. Thus ended the career of one of the coolest and most daring outlaws that ever infested central Nebraska. His father had been hanged but a few months before for stealing horses and his body shot full of holes by vigilantes, but the charge of horse stealing was stoutly denied by the friends of the old man, and that they took a belt from his body containing \$1,000.

While the vigilantes were organized to protect property, there is no doubt but many innocent men suffered at their hands. Kit Murphy and his son

of Custer county went up into the northern part of the state about that time and were both hanged as cattle thieves. They had allowed a bunch of cattle to be put in their corral to be branded. The cattle had been stolen by some one, but whether by the Murphys or some one else, was never determined, but the Murphys paid the penalty of the crime, guilty or innocent.

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## Douglass Grove Township.

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W. D. Hall.

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It has long been desired that a history of Custer county should be written. To me has fallen the lot of gathering that part which relates to Douglass Grove. I could only wish that some more able pen than mine had been selected to draw the picture of the early hardships, the trials, the hopes and the achievements of the people in this township—the first and oldest settlement in Custer county.

In 1873 the unorganized territory west of Valley and Sherman counties was marked on the maps of Nebraska as Kountz county. Some time in this year Mr. H. H. Travis of Loup City was appointed by Colonel Noteware of the state immigration bureau as immigration agent for this territory.

The first claim taken in what is now Custer county was what is known as Oak Grove, and entered in the winter of 1873 by Edward Douglass, who died the following summer at Loup City. For him the town was named. L. R. Dowse followed as the next settler in the winter of 1873; W. H. Comstock settled here in the spring of 1874 with D. J. Caswell, Sam Wagoner, B. D. Allen, James Oxford, E. D. Eubank, C. A. Hale, A. E. Denis and Thomas Darnell. A. A. Higgins came in the spring of 1875 and brought with him a family of twelve, which greatly added to the population of the little settlement. Mr. Higgins was a patriarch in Jesus, a staunch upholder of the teachings of Wesley, and it was under his roof that Elder Lemin, the pioneer of Methodism in Nebraska, preached and held the first quarterly conference in the county.

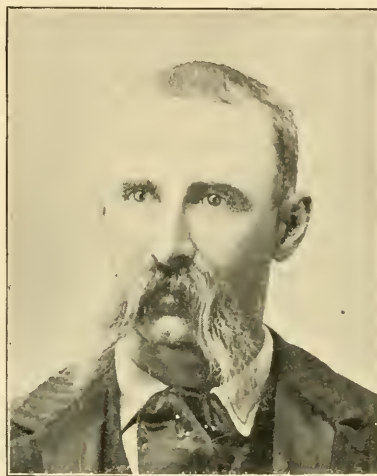
Frank Ingram bought from the heirs of Edward Douglass the Oak Grove claim in 1875. Oak Grove is a beautiful place. The country around is rough and rugged in the extreme, and known to all the old settlers on the Loup.

One tree bore for years the name, "William Cody, 1869," cut deep into its

shaggy bark, showing that "Buffalo Bill" had camped here in some of his hunting or scouting trips. Opposite the grove were three large pine trees standing four miles back from the river. Two of them were cut in the winter of 1873, taken to Loup City and sawed into boards, which were taken to Omaha and Lincoln as an advertisement for Kountz county pioneers. In 1880 the last



W. D. HALL.



M. VANDENBERG.

of the three pine trees had disappeared. They had stood for years, faithful sentinels in the dreary sand hills—a guide for the weary hunter to his camp. All the early settlers miss that last lone pine, which could be seen for miles on either side of the river. None but a tenderfoot could have destroyed the last remaining relic of early times.

The first cattle ranch in this section was established by Nimrod Caple and Manly, his son, in 1875, on the head of Spring creek, where bursts forth from the side of a steep hill one of the largest and purest springs in the country. Mr. Caple sold out his cattle and left in 1876. In his departure many a settler rejoiced, for his cattle were always doing some damage to crops. Mr. Caple always offered to pay, but invariably carried a fifty-dollar bill, which none of his neighbors could ever "bust." He always, in this way, got his cattle, but the farmer seldom got any pay. Manly Caple was a chapter in himself—a physical athlete, daring and generous, but with an insatiable passion for gambling. He was always getting into trouble, and always got out by getting some one else in. He was afterwards mixed up in the Olive-Ketchum



feud and report says finally died at the end of a rope for horse stealing in the far west. The Caples were succeeded by Elisha Taylor and Charles Clayton, who in turn gave place to W. S. Wescott, and what has since been known as the Wescott & Gibbons ranch.

In the fall of 1874 the settlers entitled to vote had to go to Ord, but in 1875 were granted a voting place for judicial purposes as a part of Valley county. The first postoffice established in the county was named for Edward Douglass, and Calvin Douglass was appointed postmaster. He failed to qualify, and W. H. Comstock was appointed, thus becoming the first postmaster, and holding the office for over a quarter of a century, or until the past year. A. B. Crouch was the first mail carrier, and made weekly trips to Arcadia on foot, fording the river.

With their inherent love of liberty and intelligence, these early settlers, with the aid of Oscar Babcock, superintendent of Valley county, organized school district No. 1 in the fall of 1875, with Mrs. E. D. Eubank as teacher. The first sermon was by E. D. Eubank; the first marriage, A. E. Denis and Miss Josie Eubank; the first birth, Alice Dowsee; the first justice of the peace, W. H. Comstock, and before him the first lawsuit. The first assessment of taxes was also made by Mr. Comstock, whose territory embraced what is at present Sargent, West Union, Lillian, Douglass Grove, Myrtle, Westerville and part of Garfield. During the winter of 1875 a bill was introduced in the state Legislature and passed both houses bounding a new county west of Valley, twenty-four miles square, to be named in honor of the governor. Governor Garber vetoed this bill, but for two years the county was known as Garber county. The next legislature, in 1878, bounded the present county and named it for the gallant Indian fighter, General Custer.

The year 1876 was the most trying in the history of the township. Rumors of Indian outbreaks kept the settlers in constant fear. It was during this summer that Messrs. Comstock and Wagoner, having been called to Omaha on a jury, saw in the "Bee" the announcement of an Indian massacre of the settlers in the Middle Loup valley. They left immediately for Kearney, over the Union Pacific, arrived at 2 o'clock p. m., and started for their home, walking the entire distance of eighty miles in twenty-four hours. They found the settlers from Victoria creek and other points for thirty miles up the river, except Douglass Grove, assembled on Spring creek, just back of Oak Grove, expecting an Indian attack. However, the Indians did not materialize, but what was nearly as bad was a visitation of grasshoppers which destroyed every growing crop. Not enough wheat was left for the spring seeding. Yet the people had the sand to stick it through, and the following year were rewarded with fine crops and a big immigration, which made good prices for

all they had to sell. As a result of the Indian scare, Fort Garber was built in the summer of 1876, a square fort with bastioned corners, of sufficient capacity to hold all the settlers. A well was dug for water supply. Forty stands of arms were obtained from the government, and a company of state militia organized called the Garber County Regulars, with W. H. Comstock as captain.

Uncle Sam Wagoner won fame as a hunter. To his reliable rifle and unerring aim the first settlers own many thanks.

Douglass Grove received its full share of the pioneer inflow until 1884, when practically all government land was occupied. The first settler in Dry valley was James Wagoner, who settled on what is now the Len Town place in 1878. Frank Muthie took the next claim, followed by N. W. Alberts, Dewitt Konklin, W. Bener, J. W. Scott, John Campbell, the Amos family, Brumbaugh family, Joe Armour, J. Roth, John Jems, the Twombly family, Worley brothers, Mr. Mattox, Swanson brothers, C. Gollier, A. Kohn, W. Newcomb, L. L. Wood, James Boggs, Mr. Bowers and others who have made Dry valley a neighborhood of permanence and thrift.

The first purely stock or ranch interests, aside from the Caple, were those of M. E. Vandenberg, who located at the mouth of Sand Creek in 1878, where he now lives; the Payne ranch in Dry valley, in 1880, the property since 1884 of S. L. Glover & Sons; the Charley Hill ranch, 1880, on Wagoner creek, occupied in 1883 by Anthony & Warren, but now a part of the farms of numerous settlers.

Not to make too lengthy this paper, and yet do justice to those who helped to make the history of Douglass Grove in its first decade, we mention the three Mickle brothers and their families, the Glazier family, I. C. Buck, John Stewart, the Stevens family, Cleveland family, W. Hudson, Dewitt Comstock, W. S. House, H. H. McIntosh, H. G. Stockes, J. A. Kenyon, G. E. Whitcomb, W. D. Hall, J. H. Walton, W. C. Gaddish and W. P. Higgins, who twice has represented the county in the state Legislature.

As trials and hardships are the common heritage of all pioneers, there is no need to go into the details of what these early sufferers experienced. One or two incidents will portray what all were liable to endure. In March, 1878, J. F. Henderson, from Harrison county, Missouri, settled on Lillian creek. February 27, 1879, he went into Hunter's Shanty canon to cut cedar for fuel and posts. He had nearly completed his day's work when, in felling a twenty-two inch tree it turned on its stump as it fell, in such a way as to strike Mr. Henderson, throwing him down the steep canon side, where he struck on a pile of brush. His left arm was broken in two places, the left hip dislocated and the leg broken below the knee. In this condition, with snow on the

ground, he laid from sundown until after sunrise the next morning, when he was found by his wife. Unable to move him in any way, she went for help to the nearest residence, that of her daughter, Mrs. James Oxford. It was noon when, with oxen and a wagon, they came back and the bruised and broken



J. F. HENDERSON.

sufferer was taken a mile to the home of James Oxford. To get help was the next thing, and remembering that three trappers had been at the mouth of Lillian creek, Mrs. Oxford started for the camp, two miles away. One man was there, and as she told him of the accident to her father and asked him to go for help to the nearest neighbor's on Victoria creek, eight miles distant, the trapper said: "I know how to sympathize with you, for I lost my wife and child in a blizzard." He started on his sixteen mile run, and came back the next morning with Isaac and Temp Merchant. Temp was dispatched for the nearest doctor, having to go to Loup City, fifty miles down the river. Dr. Hawkins reached the Oxford home Sunday morning, the fourth day after the accident, under the influence of liquor, and incompetent to do the surgical work required. Running his hand hastily over the broken leg, he said: "Your leg is all right, but the arm will have to be amputated." With knife and saw he cut the arm square off, took two or three stitches from skin to skin across the freshly cut flesh, and said it was all that was necessary for him to do. Mr. Merchant insisted that the leg was broken and must be dressed. With reluctance the doctor roughly tried to put the broken bones in place

and bound them with splints, then left for his home. Seven months Mr. Henderson lay in that pioneer home, unable to get from his bed, when he was moved to Mrs. Comstock's home. Every settler from Loup City to Victoria creek vied with each other in rendering kindness to the sufferer. Connected with this incident is the pathetic death of little Daisy Oxford, the pet granddaughter of Mr. Henderson. A slender child of eighteen months, she sat at his bedside on the Saturday before the doctor came; rocking forward, she, in some way, caught the bail of the tea kettle, sitting on the edge of the stove, and the contents of boiling water was poured over her head and hands. The little sufferer, under the care of Mrs. Comstock, who had been sent for, lived nearly a week. Mr. Enbank preached her funeral sermon, and then remained four days, expecting to be called to preach the funeral of Mr. Henderson. Mr. Henderson is still a resident of Douglass Grove, intelligent, companionable and with a heart thankful beyond expression to the old settlers who filled the office of good Samaritan to him in those days. Another incident that speaks of the privations of the pioneer's life and love for his family, was the death of Arnett on the Bayhoffer place. Christmas was near, and no money to get the loved ones a present. The father took his gun, in which the breech pin was secured with a piece of wire, and went to the cornfield, thinking to get chickens to sell and buy Christmas presents. They found him next day with the breech pin blown through his head.

As a township, Douglass Grove has exhibited a remarkable stability. While Custer county shows a census loss of nearly 2,000 inhabitants, Douglass Grove shows a gain of forty-nine. Probably eighty per cent. of her settlers yet hold their original claims. Strictly an agricultural community, her citizens have constructed an irrigation ditch at an expense of \$20,000. A farmer's club, organized in 1890, has on its list of members over 100 names, sustains monthly club meetings, and has held ten annual institutes. A temperance society, organized in the '80's, still holds monthly literary exercises. There are good churches and abundant common school privileges, a hall for public gatherings, a good roller flouring mill, a route has been mapped for rural mail delivery, which will reach some 125 families, or over one-half the population in the township. Telephone connections reach all county points.

It is fitting that in this brief history special mention be made of the wives of the earliest settlers. Brave and uncomplaining, upon them fell most heavily the unpleasant part of pioneer life. The preparation of food with scant supply of cooking utensils, and sometimes even without a stove. Silent moulders of the future destiny of our township, they are worthy the homage of generations yet to come. To Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Comstock the writer is beholden for much of the data used in this paper. Identified with the settlement from



the first, they have preserved newspaper clippings and incidents relating to those early days. Having laid her own little ones away to rest in their infancy, the mother love in woman's nature has expanded to grasp the suffering and sorrow of the entire community, and none know Mrs. Comstock but to bless her for her kindly ministrations in hours of pain and destitution. Worthy is she of the encomium of Master to Mary: "She hath done what she could."

The advent of the railroad has changed the old conditions that required a round trip of 160 miles to the nearest railroad town, and Douglass Grove, profiting by past experience, enters on the second quarter century of her existence strong in the assurance of ever-increasing prosperity.

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## Incidents of Douglass Grove.

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W. H. Comstock.

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In company with D. J. Caswell I started from Moingona, Boone county, Iowa, in March, 1874. In due course of time we arrived at Loup City, the metropolis of Sherman county, and which consisted of a log hotel kept by C. Y. Rossiter, and a general store of which Frank Ingram was the owner and proprietor. About this time Frank had some friends who had come to make him a visit. His family consisted of himself, wife, one child and a hired man and hired girl. The house was small and sleeping rooms scarce. But Frank's mind was active and he soon had a plan to help himself out of the difficulty and provide sleeping apartments for the visitors without seriously inconveniencing the family. He went to the room of the hired man and told him that it would be necessary for him to vacate his bed, as he had company that would have to be taken care of. He then went to the room of the hired girl, woke her up and laid the situation before her. He said either her bed or the hired man's must be given up for the company. He didn't like to make one of them sit up all night, but he thought that as the hired man and the hired girl had been keeping company, and intended to get married, anyway, they might just as well get married then and there and thus settle the whole difficulty about the beds. This seemed to meet with the approval of the two parties most interested, and Mr. Ingram, being the county judge, immediately issued a license and married them on the spot.

At Loup City we became acquainted with B. D. Allen and Sherman Wagner. We all started in April 1874, and drove to Douglass Grove, where we selected our homesteads and commenced to improve them, but just as the ears of corn began to form, the grasshoppers appeared and in a few hours completely ate up every green thing. Uncle Dave had some tobacco plants in the edge of a draw which was very choice, and anticipated the pleasure of

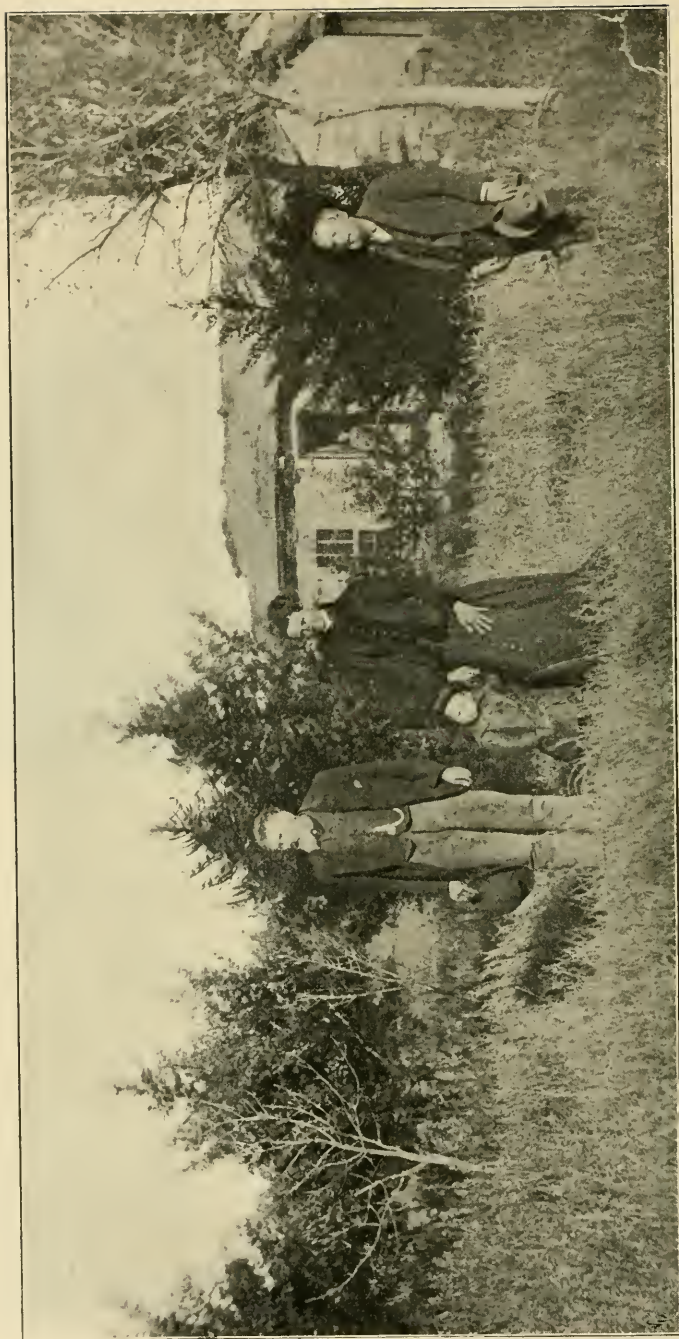


WM. COMSTOCK.



MRS. WM. COMSTOCK.

smoking the weed of his own raising the coming winter. But, alas! his hopes were blasted. He covered the plants with anything he could get, but the festive hoppers eat holes in the covering and chewed Uncle Dave's tobacco as long as it lasted. The settlers were left entirely destitute, not having produced a thing for the support of themselves and families during the winter. The government at this time had troops stationed at a point about nine miles above Ord, the county seat of Valley county, and it had been decided to erect more commodious quarters for the soldiers. There was plenty of sand and gravel and work was commenced on the garrison. The walls were constructed of red cedar, of which there was an abundance in the canons not far distant. A sawmill was put in operation, and teams were hired to haul the logs and lumber, as well as all other material needed in constructing the fort. The settlers flocked in from all directions and all were given employment by the government. Allen and myself and Caswell went over. Allen got a job working in the mill, while Caswell and I hauled gravel from the pit and assisted on the walls of the building.



Wm. Comstock and Wife in front of their Old Log House, built in 1875.

In the spring of 1885 a man by the name of Eberlin, with his wife and a companion by the name of Hancock, started on a hunting trip up the Middle Loup river. When about eight miles above our settlement their attention was called to the peculiar antics of a horseman on the east side of the river. He was riding at a furious pace, coatless and hatless, with his long hair streaming in the wind behind him as he flew along. The hunting party was badly frightened and immediately started back to the settlement, arriving there with their team covered with foam. As soon as they were able to tell a rational story, they reported that they had seen Indians on the east side of the river. Every settler was at once notified, a council held, and a decision reached to proceed at once to make preparations for the protection of the settlement against an attack from the red men. Volunteers were called for to go to Fort Hartsuff and notify Captain Munson, the commander, and ask him to send two or three regiments of soldiers down. D. B. Allen offered to perform this duty, while four or five others volunteered to go up the river to investigate the story told by the hunters. All were instructed to ride all night and report at 8 o'clock the next morning. It was laughable to see Ben Allen as he started for the fort, and a photograph of him taken at that time would be a most valuable contribution to this history. His dress suit consisted of an old pair of blue overalls, with a heavy fringe around the bottom, he was barefooted, and had on no other clothing except a striped shirt and an old straw hat. He was mounted, bareback, upon an old horse belonging to Mr. Higgins. About eight o'clock the next morning the people met to consult, and hear the report of the scouts when they should return. Soon a solitary horseman was seen coming from the direction of the river, and four or five others from the north.

The single horseman proved to be the valiant Ben, and before he was fairly within speaking distance he shouted: "It's all right; General Munson said if we were killed by Indians to let him know and he would come over and give them h——!" The other party now rode into camp and reported that they were unable to discover any Indians, but they had found out that the horseman who had frightened the hunters was a half-crazy fellow who lived on the east side of the river. This news was a great relief to the settlers, but they nevertheless decided to build a fort where all could congregate in case of any sudden attack from the savages. The site selected for the fort was in the center of the northwest quarter of section fifteen. A description of this wonderful fortification will be found in the history of Douglass Grove township. It was afterwards named Fort Disappointment, for the reason that no Indians ever appeared in that vicinity.



## Lee's Park.

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J. L. H. Knight. Written 1887.

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Lee's Park is a beautiful valley lying one-half in Custer county and one-half in Valley county. It also lies midway between the Middle Loup and Clear creek valleys. Surrounded by hills and slightly rolling, it contains over 4,000 acres of the choicest land. The soil is a dark loam, and very fertile; capable of withstanding very dry weather, as there is no underlying hardpan.

Lee's Park has always furnished more than its share of farm products for exhibition at the state fair, and especially was this the case in the fall of 1890 when the drouth injured the crops so very much all over the state. At the Custer county corn show in the winter of 1891-2 Lee's Park furnished the premium corn. In the early days, when parties from the more southern counties crossed this valley, it was supposed to contain but a few hundred acres of not very good land. It was known that the central part of the valley was a school section, and so but little was thought of its settlement so far from markets. In September, 1874, however, James Lee, seeing this little valley located on a central quarter section of land, and made it his home. The following summer he entered the quarter on which he lived as a pre-emption, and also the adjoining quarter as a tree claim under the old law which required forty acres of trees planted. Although parties often passed through the park, no one seemed inclined to locate. Mr. Lee kept bachelor's hall in a sod house, and began to subdue the native soil. He evidently succeeded, as his first wheat crop of one acre testified. He obtained from it forty bushels of wheat, which is supposed to be the largest yield ever raised in the park.

The following spring he continued his operations on the farm, and planted some trees on his timber claim, but the grasshoppers again found him, and ate up his corn crop, and also all of his little trees. During these years, as hunters and adventurers passed through, they occasionally stopped at the bachelor's sod mansion, and the fact of his being the only settler, and working with his trees on his timber claim, caused the travelers to name the valley "Lee's Park." Here then this settler dwelt, year after year, in solitude—farming, planting trees, and doing his sewing, cooking and washing. He tried to get others to locate, but no one volunteered. Nearly four years had passed by, and his courage, which had remained firm for years, began to wane, and he at last decided to leave his beautiful half section of land.

About this time, however, Frank Wright offered to locate in the park, providing Mr. Lee surrendered to him his pre-emption, on which was his house and well. This Mr. Lee agreed to do, and soon after, Mr. Wright started to claim his new possessions. On his way he fell in with some land lookers who seemed to be headed for Lee's Park, so they went together, and on arriving at



NELSON POTTER,  
An old Settler of Lee's Park.

Mr. Lee's, Wright asked for the papers, which were immediately surrendered. Soon after, however, this Mr. Wright sold the place for \$25 to F. E. Morrison. These land lookers were William and Joseph Murray, who, in February, 1878, took claims in the park, and their families arrived in May the same year. Soon after this, in March, Benjamin Knight located in the park, and returned to his Wisconsin home to claim the hand of his "best girl," and together they journeyed to their frontier home. From this time on, settlers flocked in rapidly, and James Lee, no longer solitary, decided not to leave. His pre-emption right, however, being gone, he proceeded to the extreme end of the park and filed a 160-acre piece as a homestead, on the bank of the little stream afterward known as "Lee's creek."

In July Messrs. Overton, Chandler True, Jay Hamlin, George Hamlin, Jr., E. Stephens and William Vanalstine settled. In August, T. J. Johnson and Amos Smith; then followed Parish Freeman and his son Charles; William Hall, Joseph Peacock and James Thompson. In 1879 Edward Knight, Philip Lynch, James Wisely, N. Mehrhoff, Nelson Potter, Sam Minchell, and Mr.

Abel located here. In 1880, Thomas, David and Archie Tod, F. E. Morrison, and James Bradford, also Thomas, John and Sam Berridge, who afterwards commenced the importation of English shire horses, under the firm name of Berridge Bros. They made three importations, among which were some very choice specimens of the breed. In 1881, J. L. H. Knight settled permanently here with his father, Edward Knight, and as this youngster was a lover of fine stock, he early sought an opportunity to obtain some thoroughbred hogs. His first purchase was in 1885, and was a Poland-China pig, which cost him \$30. Two years after this he purchased three head of shorthorn cattle, and from that time he continued to show his belief in good blood by frequent purchases. He purchased 520 acres of his father and brother in the southern end of the park and named it "Pleasant Hill Stock Farm," where he had choice specimens of Shorthorn cattle, Poland-China hogs, and Plymouth rock fowls. Although not confining himself exclusively to hogs, still he made the raising of fine pigs a specialty, and was often spoken of as the "hog man."

In 1883, the fine section of school land in Lee's Park was put upon the market, and two brothers, C. A. and W. A. Forbes, energetic young men, were fortunate enough to obtain 160 acres each. At the same time, J. L. H. Knight purchased the remaining 320 acres for W. S. Delano, who was then in the signal service, and who was one of Mr. Knight's classmates in the Michigan agricultural college. In 1886, his term of enlistment expired, and very willing was he to leave the service of Uncle Sam to engage in farming. He at once commenced raising seeds for D. M. Ferry & Co., of Detroit, Michigan. His two brothers, F. E. Delano and Milton Delano, shortly afterwards entered into partnership with him, under the firm name of Delano Bros.

The early settlers of Lee's Park underwent many hardships and privations. Corn stalks and willows were the main reliance in those days for fuel. The mail service at first was not very good; for a while their postoffice was at Loup City, a distance of twenty-two miles; afterwards there was an office established at Westcott, which was twelve miles distant, but shortly it was arranged to have an office on Clear creek, four miles west of the park. This was quickly followed in the fall of 1878 or '79, with Uncle Sam's locating one in Lee's Park.

During the fall of 1878, the first district school meeting was held in Lee's Park, which was then organized as Joint District No. 11, of Custer and Valley counties. This meeting was held at the house of Parish Freeman, and it was decided to build a sod schoolhouse, which was completed the following spring. During the summer of 1878, a Sunday school was organized with Benjamin Knight as superintendent. It was held from house to house, and occa-

sionally Father Cook, a Baptist minister living on the Middle Loup, came over and preached. After the schoolhouse was built, the Sunday school and preaching was held there. This sod schoolhouse was occupied for years, until it was declared unsafe, when a sod building was hired of F. E. Morrison, to hold school in. During these years, the school district being large, and in two counties, caused much disagreement. Some wished it divided, while others wished it to remain as it was. Finally the south end was allowed to go off with District No. 91. This, however, did not settle the matter, and school meeting after school meeting was called, which finally resulted, in 1889, in dividing the district on the county line. The following summer, these districts built new frame schoolhouses, one in Custer county, and one in Valley county.

In April, 1884, the town of Lee Park was laid out in Custer county on the town line, and the same year, the Lilly and Honder addition to Lee Park was laid out, adjoining the original town, and in Valley county, with the postoffice in Valley county. Then came quite a little boom for the new town. A general merchandise store was built by Lilly & Honder, to which the postoffice was removed; then followed a blacksmith shop, a hotel, a wagon shop, and a feed stable. This little town was progressing finely when the B. & M. railroad concluded to outdo the U. P. railroad, and so built past Loup City, the terminus of the U. P. railroad, and stopped at Arcadia, five miles from Lee's Park. The little town held out for a while, but the railroad town of Arcadia took away its vitality, and after some struggles, the town of Lee's Park was no more. All the buildings were torn down or removed, and an attempt was made to take away even the postoffice. The attempt was nearly, or quite successful, as the office was actually removed to Arcadia, but prompt action was taken by patrons of the office, and an order came for its return, only a day after its removal. The postoffice was afterwards removed from Valley county across the line into Custer county, where it still remains. The fact that originally the postoffice was in Valley county, and is now in Custer county, has caused some confusion as to the real location of Lee's Park, some thinking it in Valley, and some in Custer county. The name of the town and postoffice has also been confused with the name of the valley. Originally the postoffice had the same name as the valley, but Jay Hamlin, while postmaster, had the name of the office changed to Lee Park, consequently the name of the postoffice is Lee Park, and the name of the Valley is Lee's Park.

At the time of the laying out of the town, a cemetery association was formed, and five acres of land was purchased from W. S. Delano, and laid out as the Lee's Park cemetery. Trees were soon set out and cared for, and in



consequence the cemetery is quite a fine one at this time. The following year the Catholic cemetery was laid out one-half mile north of Lee's Park cemetery.

The farmers of Lee's Park are honest and industrious, and are not of the shifting kind. Most of the old settlers are still residing here, and seem to have no idea of soon changing their location. This makes it difficult to purchase a farm in Lee's Park, and when one is sold, it is at good figures. The farmers have organized a farmers' club in the park, which shows they are anxious to learn. It might be interesting in closing this narrative to remark that James Lee who lived here alone for so many years, is still residing here, but he is no longer a lonely bachelor, for a wife and four children cheer him in his home.

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## West Union Precinct.

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H. J. Shinn.

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West Union precinct is situated north of the Middle Loup river, extending north to the county line, and in shape is an irregular triangle, its length being about twenty miles, and its mean width about six miles. The general lay of the land is undulating; the soil, as a general thing, is black, sandy loam, very productive, although here and there in the Middle Loup valley, as well as on the elevated land in the northwest part of the precinct, sand predominates. Not to the great extent, however, of making it non-productive.

Almost the entire precinct is now utilized either for farming or for pasturage. The settlement, growth and development of West Union precinct has proceeded slowly since the year 1878. During this year the first permanent settlers: J. R. Orvis, R. G. Carr and father, Elmer Sweet and father, C. H. Peters, Elias Whaley, Gil Scott, Gus Cosler and Jerry Phelps, all from Brush Creek, Iowa, settled in what is now the vicinity of West Union. J. R. Orvis and R. G. Carr located the town of West Union, each of them taking as many claims as they could hold under the law. These persons evidently contemplated the stock business, as at that time the range was unlimited. The following year another flood of settlers came in, and took up quarters. T. W.

Dean, Leroy Leep, John Pfrehm, Sr., and a host of others, narrowing the range to such an extent that they decided to engage in farming and mercantile business. From this time on, there was almost a constant influx of settlers until but a short time afterwards, in 1880, we find Lewis Sutton, O. S.



J. C. PREDMORE.



MRS. J. C. PREDMORE.

Pulliam, Jasper Wallace, M. L. Marsh and sons, J. C. Predmore, George Garrison, L. Harris, J. L. Walker and David Garrison.

In the fall of 1879, Walter Bedwell, subsequently county treasurer of Custer county, made settlement seven miles west of West Union.

The next spring, April 5th, 1880, T. J. Butcher and two of his sons, S. D. and G. W., and J. R. Wabel, his son-in-law, arrived at T. W. Dean's place. J. R. Wabel afterwards located about one and one-half miles west of the place of T. W. Dean. T. J. and S. D. Butcher located further up the valley near Gates postoffice. The same year came Fred Shoemaker, Henry Pulliam, Lyman Pike, Surene Pike, Orvas Pike, Ben Greibel, A. S. Burgher, C. E. Freeman, J. P. Halsey, Monroe Freeman, J. L. Walker, Eli Carson, Al Darling and George Pence, and in 1882 came S. W. Leep and four sons, William Stalling and sons, W. R. Swan and sons, Herbert Richards, James Farley, Robert Farley, James Milburn, William Milburn, Dick Clifford, Fred Girding, J. C. Vose, T. Gill, J. H. Ullom, Charles Arndt and John Murphy, who located in the west end of the precinct near Milburn. Aside from the persons heretofore named, many other settlements were made in this precinct during the '80s, among

them a floating population which has given way to subsequent permanent settlers. The pioneer settlers heretofore mentioned include only those who are known as settlers of the Middle Loup valley.

It will be remembered that the Middle Loup valley does not include all the territory in the subject of this sketch. What is known as the hill, or table land, including the various tables and parts, is also situated in this precinct, and comprises a major portion thereof, and was settled about the same time that the valley land was settled, the soil being of equally good quality, and admirably adapted to agriculture. Cummings Park, a beautiful and almost level table land, comprising several thousand acres, is situated north and west of the town of West Union, and within four miles thereof.

In the year 1879, George Cummings, William Cummings, Samuel Abernathy and Aleck Nelson moved from Clinton, Iowa, and located in the heart of this park, hence the name Cummings Park. In the year 1882, James and Gilbert Cummings settled near the county line, or about two miles from George and William. After this came James Abernathy, Robert Northy, Eli Jameson, James Wilson, Henry Plathe, Joe and George Ankney, W. Beager and sons, and various others. The hill land as well as the valley was also partly settled by frontiersmen, or floating population, that has long since abandoned it and given place to a more substantial and permanent class of people; but those that have been heretofore mentioned are still residents of the precinct with but few exceptions. About one year ago the B. & M. railroad company extended its line of railroad from Arcadia to Sargent, a town located six miles east of the town of West Union, so that instead of it requiring two days to make a trip to the railroad, it only becomes necessary to take one; thus a long felt want has been supplied.

West Union at the present time consists of two general stores, P. Metcalf, who also runs the postoffice, and William Pfrehm; Walmblesley & Smith, drugs; William Peterson, blacksmith; Mrs. William Pfrehm, millinery; James Pointer, artist.

It might be of interest to the reader to know something of the personal incidents or reminiscences pertaining to the settlement of this precinct. We have heretofore had occasion to mention the names of T. W. Dean, Leroy Leep and Gus Cosler. A peculiar incident happened to these parties on November 20th, after their settlement in the precinct. About three o'clock in the morning Mr. Dean was awakened from a sound sleep, and discovered that his room was as light as day—the whole heavens seemed to be on fire. He sprang out of bed, gathered his pants, and proceeded to put them on. At this moment Gus Cosler came dashing up shouting "fire! fire! fire!" It was a

prairie fire coming from the northwest—a grand and awful sight, never to be forgotten. Property and life were at stake. The head fire was coming on in the west of them at the speed of a race horse. A stiff gale was blowing from the northwest. One hundred yards in advance of the main body of fire, Dean had turned his horses loose and they proceeded south toward the river. A



Stock Farm of Mr. Tarlton, near Walworth, Neb.

pony was lariated near the house which Lee Leep, then being present, quickly mounted, and followed the loose horses, their only hope being to find and drive them east across a piece of breaking before the fire reached them. He almost reached the place where he knew the horses were, after having left the strip of breaking which was just mentioned. Just as he came to a deep ravine, he discovered the flames shoot twenty feet high and dash madly forward. Being too far from the river to make his escape in that direction, he wheeled his horse through the blinding smoke, madly lashed him toward the strip of breaking. Blinded with smoke, burned by fire, and almost suffocated he reached the breaking, hands and face burned, hair and eye brows scorched, panting and exhausted. After the fire had passed, one of the horses was found on the the river bank, so badly burned that it only lived but a few days. The other ran into the river and made its way nearly to the opposite side, where it became mired in the quick sand and was found during the day by Mr. Dean. The neighbors were summoned, and an effort made to save the beast, but it was so bruised and burned that after trying to get it out for half a day it had to be killed.

This left Mr. Dean without a team, but this matter was adjusted, however. Gus Cosler had an ox team, but no wagon, so they formed a partner-



ship. Dean furnished the wagon and Cosler the team, thus they succeeded in getting along until they could derive means to do otherwise.

The house of Mr. Dean and Mr. Cosler and their effects were saved. They now look back to those days and wonder how they could possibly get along. They are now in comfortable circumstances—possessing all the modern conveniences, having horses, carriages and farm machinery in abundance. Prairie fires in those days were not unfrequent, and the story just told is similar to many like occurrences in the days of the first settlement of this precinct.

We have heretofore made mention of Cummings park and the early settlers thereof. This is an elevated portion of the precinct, and wells to the depth of 200 feet or more are the rule, and there are some wells that would exceed 250 feet. In the first settlement of this locality the well or water question was a very perplexing one. It was known that the whole country contained sheet water on a certain level, and of course on hill land it was farther to water than on low land. Settlers were poor, and as a rule were unable to bear the expense of a hydraulic or a casing well, as they now have it; as a consequence they resorted to digging wells, even at that great distance, casing them with lumber through the sand and gravel, and drawing or elevating the water by means of a horse, or two horses, as the case might be, with a rope extending over pulleys, attached to a half barrel, with a valve in the bottom. Among those who had wells as above described were Samuel Abernathy and James Cummings, and by reason of that a sad coincidence happened each. In the fall of 1883 Samuel Abernathy caused a well to be dug on his premises to the depth of 196 feet, having procured an inexhaustible supply of water. Soon after its construction one morning, while attempting to draw water, the bucket or barrel, caught at the bottom of the well against the curb. Mr. Abernathy, thinking that it would be necessary to go to the bottom of the well to unfasten the bucket, there being no rope convenient except the one that the bucket was fastened to, told his brother that he could fasten the rope at the top and twine it around his foot and slide to the bottom of the well. His brother protested against such a hazardous undertaking, but to no avail, and he at once attempted to make the descent. After having proceeded about six feet from the top of the well his hold gave way and he fell to the bottom of the well, 196 feet. To the surprise of his brother he was found to be alive and conscious. Help was summoned, and on investigation it was found that by his falling into the bucket or barrel he had jarred it loose, whereupon he gave orders that he was able to hold onto the bucket or rope until they could raise him from the well. They proceeded to draw him up, and to the surprise of all they were successful in doing this, landing him at the top conscious, yet badly

bruised and mangled, one arm broken in several places, his legs broken and his body badly bruised. Although everything was done that could possibly be done for his comfort, he only lived about four hours.

Later on, in September, 1885, James Cummings, one of Cummings Park's respected citizens, met with a sad and similar fate to the one just narrated. Soon after his settlement, he caused a well to be dug after the style of the one mentioned above, but to the depth of 210 feet. This well had been dug for about three years, and Mr. Cummings, thinking that possibly the curb had become rotten to such an extent that it would be necessary to recurb, said to his wife one morning that he would hitch a team to the end of the rope and tie a stick to the other end, and she might let him down in the well for the purpose of examining it, whereupon the rope was drawn out its full length, laid upon the ground, one end extending over the pulley and tied in the center of a stick about two feet long, and a team hitched to the other end, face from the well.

Mr. Cummings, taking a small stick in his hand, and sitting on the stick and astride the rope, directed his wife to back the team and let him down slowly. Slowly and slowly the team backed. The wife could hear the rapping of the stick on the curb until within about ten feet of the bottom of the well she heard the cry of "stop!" Then again she heard the rapping of the stick on the curb, then instantly came loud and clear a tremendous crash. The wife, well knowing the cause, instantly screamed at the team, but they could not raise the husband from the earth that had fallen upon him. She hastened to the well and called to her husband, but no response was heard. She called again and again, but everything was still as death. Excited and terror-stricken she called for help. Friends and neighbors, hearing her cry, hurried to the rescue. What could be done? Buried alive 200 feet below the surface of the earth! News of the disaster spread like wild fire. Stout men and sympathizing women hurried to the scene to lend such aid as might be necessary. On investigation it was found that the well had caved in for a distance of over twenty feet, leaving a large cavity above Mr. Cummings. After examining the situation, it was decided to send for one William Garlock, who was an experienced well man. During this time nothing was done, but upon his arrival he took charge of the rescuing, and said that it would be necessary to procure lumber to recurb the portion caved in; consequently teams were sent to West Union and the work of rescuing proceeded as rapidly as possible. He first directed that it would be necessary to shovel dirt into the well for the purpose of filling up the cavity before proceeding with the digging. After this was done and the curb cut, ready to place in the well, Mr. Garlock, with

the aid of helpers, proceeded to uncover the doomed man. At this time he was covered with dirt to the depth of about twenty feet. Soon after the digging began, Mr. Garlock reported that Mr. Cummings was alive, for he could hear him breathing. This was a great surprise to the friends and neighbors who were so anxiously waiting. The work proceeded with more rapidity than before, and report after report came up from the well digger that Mr. Cummings was still alive. After about ten hours of constant work the head of the doomed man was uncovered, and to the surprise of all it was found that he was conscious and able to give instructions. Slowly, slowly and persistently the noble well digger proceeded, until the entire body down below the knees was uncovered.

At this time everybody was anxiously listening for orders to pull the doomed man to the top, but instead a voice was heard from below: "Let the rope down! I want to come up!" The rope was quickly let down and the well man taken from the well. Everybody wondered what was the matter, and gathered about him for information. He told them that he could do no more; that the man's feet were under the curb, and that he could not extend his curb on account of the dry ground—that if he undertook to dig below the curb, as he would have to do in order to get his feet out, the ground would run in and cause the well to cave, and that it could not possibly be done. He further said that the only thing that could be done was to fasten a rope around him and pull him loose by force; that there was one chance of saving his life in this way, but that he was entirely exhausted, and could do nothing more. Another man being present who had had some experience in well making, volunteered to go down and fasten the rope around him. After this was done, as many as twenty-five men took hold of the rope above, and at a command, began pulling gradually, pulling harder and harder until the rope broke.

As quick as thought some one present suggested that he had at his home a three-quarter rope that he thought was strong enough to pull him out, and accordingly some one was dispatched for the rope, and in a very short time returned with it. Again the well man descended and securely fastened the rope around the body, and again returned to the top of the well. On his arrival, as many men as could get hold of the rope did so, and at a command began pulling as before. Steady, stronger and stronger they pulled until the body was released, every man falling to his knees, the rope having been drawn so tight that when he became loosened he was thrown up several feet. Orders were given to raise him fast, lest the well should again cave. After he was drawn out of danger, orders were given to go slow. This was done, and in a few seconds Mr. Cummings was at the top of the well, alive, rational and

able to tell his experience. He said that he did not realize that he had been in the well so long, although he was conscious all the time; that he knew when they were throwing dirt into the well, and knew when the well man began digging; he thought, however, that the falling of the dirt in the well was a heavy thunder storm.

Dr. Wamsley was present, and took charge of the case, but found it a bad one. The body was bruised, and the bowels so badly torn that inflammation set in and in four days he died. The accident happened about 8 o'clock on Saturday morning, and it was 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon when he was taken from the well; thus he remained in the well about thirty hours, eighteen of this time being under ground a distance of about twenty feet, and his having lived while in this condition was due, doubtless, to the fact that an iron pipe, used for pumping purposes, was hanging in the well and his face was against it, thus affording him sufficient air to keep him alive.

This sad incident will ever be remembered by the old settlers of Cummings Park with sadness, as Mr. Cummings was one of our best citizens, and his untimely death cast a gloom of despair over the entire community.

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## The Haunstine Tragedy.

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By James Whitehead.

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The murder of Hiram Roten and William Ashley by Albert E. Haunstine occurred November 9, 1888. It was regarded, and time has failed to change the sentiment, as one of the most unprovoked and horrible tragedies known in the history of this county. The murderer and his victims lived in the same neighborhood—Roten valley. Toward them it was not shown that Haunstine had the slightest resentment or enmity. He had, in fact, for a time made his home with Hiram Roten, at whose hands and those of his young wife he had received the best of treatment. Mr. Ashley, who was a relative of Roten's, and lived close by, was not so well known to Haunstine, yet they were on friendly terms. The school house of the district, of which Roten and Ashley were officers, was located near their homes. A clock and some lumber had been taken from the school house, and the fact of the missing goods was discovered while yet the tracks of the wagon and team of the supposed pur-



loiner were fresh and easy to trace. As this was but one instance in many of recent occurrence in the neighborhood, Messrs. Roten and Ashley determined they would thoroughly investigate and detect if possible the culprit.

We are not certain as to the length of time they were absent before their friends became uneasy and instituted a search. Some days, however, had



ALBERT HAUNSTINE.

elapsed, when a searching party visited Haunstine's home, which was back from the road and isolated, and found it unoccupied. In looking around they discovered the bodies of the missing men, near the house, partly covered by hay. Subsequent events disclosed the fact that on reaching Haunstine's house and making their business known, he delivered to them the clock which he confessed to having taken from the school house; that while they remained within no words or trouble occurred, but when they left the house and started for their wagon he took down his rifle and shot them while their backs were turned, killing them instantly. He then searched them and secured about \$40 in money, their watches and a rifle and revolver. Their team he tied in an old deserted sod house on an adjoining claim, and gathering together a few household effects, he and his wife started to get out of the country. They went to Arnold, changed teams, and drove down the South Loup river to near Madison, where Haunstine hired out to husk corn. He worked three days, sold his team and then started for Columbus, where his wife had already gone. Just as the train was nearing town it was flagged by officers who were on

his track, and he was taken by surprise and captured while sitting in the smoker with his rifle across his lap.

He was tried at the March term of the District Court. H. M. Sullivan, who was county attorney, had been consulted by the prisoner prior to his election, and had, therefore, some scruples against acting as prosecutor. As a substitute, however, he employed Judge Wall of Loup City, who, with the firm of Blair & Campbell, represented the state. The defense was conducted by C. L. Gutterson, A. R. Humphry and N. V. Harlan of York. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hung on September 6th following. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, and he was again sentenced to be hung, April 17, 1891. His defense was insanity, and before the date fixed for his execution he acted so strangely that a jury was called to determine his mental condition. The trial lasted three days. Public sentiment against the prisoner was so strong that a good deal of trouble was experienced in selecting a jury. The following named persons were finally agreed upon: J. I. Dillenbeck, T. A. Thum, James Dinwiddie, Frank Newbeck, J. C. Hunter, C. U. Richardson, John Curry, Nolan Webb, A. R. Huckleberry, A. Cross, T. H. McCarger and J. L. Compton. The witnesses for the defense were Mrs. Dr. Talbot, Miss Anna Crawford, Mrs. Wm. Blair, O. M. Kem, Wm. Blair, Wm. Hartsell, John Miller, Charles Parkhurst and Robert Noreutt. For the state were: Dr. Carter, physician at the state penitentiary; Dr. Knapp, superintendent insane asylum at Lincoln, Dr. C. Pickett, Dr. J. J. Pickett, county physician; Dr. C. H. Morris, Sheriff Jones and Rev. O. R. Beebe, all of whom, with the exception of Dr. Knapp (who said that without a more extended observation he was not prepared to state whether he was sane or insane), pronounced him sane, and believed that his condition was a feigned one. The prosecution was conducted by the attorneys who had managed the case from the beginning, while to the defense was added H. M. Sullivan, whose term of office as county attorney had expired. It was one of the hardest fought and most ably conducted legal battles ever witnessed in Custer county. Mr. Campbell (then county attorney), was a lawyer of long practice, he was familiar with every turn and detail of the case, his associates were men of exceptional ability. Judge Wall, especially, ranked high as a trial lawyer, was keen and resourceful, a good reasoner and an eloquent pleader. Gutterson, Humphrey and Harlan were experienced and well-informed practitioners, and the addition of Sullivan made a quartette that combined qualities well nigh invulnerable. They were, however, placed in a most trying position. The prejudice against the prisoner was marked and universal. No circumstance connected with the killing of his victims could be urged in palliation. It was a cold-

blooded, unprovoked butchery of two respected and highly esteemed citizens, and public sentiment demanded his execution. The date of hanging was fixed for the following day and a vast multitude had assembled from all parts of the county and from different portions of the state as well. The determined expression and sullen silence of the crowd was ominous. Representatives of the press from Lincoln, Omaha and elsewhere were present, awaiting the hour when the prisoner should atone for his crime. Adjoining the court house and facing its south door, the gallows was being erected and the din of the workmen's hammers were distinctly heard in the court room. None were more keenly alive to the situation and the odds against him than the prisoner's counsel. By mutual agreement the principal plea in his behalf was made by Mr. Sullivan. He remained calmly in his seat until the proper moment arrived. When he arose to address the jury no sound save the breathing of the audience could be heard. With a few preliminary remarks, in which he avowed his belief, and that of his associates, in the irresponsibility of the prisoner, he pushed eagerly forward into the very heart of the matter. The scene that followed was bewilderingly rapid in transformations; his appeal seemed absolutely to swell with indignation. Every look, word and gesture showed the intensity of his feelings. Those who were opposed to him in their belief as to the mental condition of the prisoner were forced to admire the determined and intrepid courage manifested in the face of all opposition. As by the legerdemain of some skilled magician, that vast audience was swayed and moved by the passionate appeals of the orator and the dramatic episodes that marked its delivery. The prisoner alone sat unmoved. The veteran judge who for years had sat upon the bench and listened to the most powerful pleadings of attorneys of note and orators of national renown, was visibly affected by the eloquence and earnestness of the young lawyer, and afterwards, in conversation with the writer, paid high tribute to his splendid effort. But no power on earth could save his client. The sword of justice, so long suspended, was about to descend. The judge delivered his charge and the jury retired to their rooms for deliberation. They returned to the court room several times for further instructions, and for the reading of different parts of the testimony. They also examined the cell, and appeared to be according the doomed man every chance. At 2 o'clock in the morning they came into court with a verdict of sanity. The prisoner received the verdict with the same stolid indifference that had characterized his appearance during the whole inquiry. When, however, the time arrived that had been designated by the court as the fatal morning, the doomed man seemed to have thrown off the mask and was, apparently, trying to fit himself for his impending fate. He

requested Sheriff Jones to call in Father Haley to administer the necessary consolation in the last moments of his earthly career. At half past 10 o'clock the priest visited the jail and learned his wishes. He requested the priest to come early next morning and prepare him to die a sincere Catholic. At the appointed hour Father Haley visited the jail, explained the doctrine of his church, and stated the necessary conditions for one who embraces the Catholic faith. Being satisfied as to the prisoner's sincerity and disposition to become a Catholic, he heard his confession, had him make the profession of faith, and administered the sacrament of baptism according to the rites of the church.

In the meantime a rumor had been floating about that a telegram had been received by Sheriff Jones from Governor Boyd, granting to the condemned a reprieve for thirty days, which, upon investigation, proved true. After the fact became generally known, great indignation was freely expressed. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the immense throng became restless, and muttered threatenings began to be heard on all sides. Just at this critical moment, before the thunder cloud of discontent and distrust of the law could burst forth, the calm, dignified person of Judge Hamer appeared upon the stone steps at the front door of the court house, who briefly, in a clear, ringing voice, addressed the people as follows:

"Fellow Citizens of Custer County—I have been trying to administer the law in this county, as I interpreted it, fairly, carefully and candidly—so carefully that no decision handed down by me upon this bench has been reversed. Have patience; the majesty of the law will be maintained. I have always found the people of this county law-abiding citizens; I have always found them ready to defend the innocent and punish the guilty. If, as I have been informed, there seems to be a disposition to murmur at the law's delay arising among you, I pray you be patient. Pause; make no mistake. This man whom you would have expiate his offense upon the gallows to-day was tried by a fair and impartial jury of his countrymen and found guilty. As he had a perfect right to do, he appealed his case to the Supreme Court, and there the verdict of your jury was sustained and he was again sentenced to be hanged. Where there is a question of the sanity of a prisoner under sentence of death, the law provides that upon notice from the sheriff of the county it becomes the duty of the district judge to cause a jury to be empanelled to make inquiry as to the sanity or insanity of such prisoner. I received such a notice. Such a jury was called, and after careful inquiry, pronounced him sane. I desire to again call the attention of the people to the fact that, as to the prisoner, he stands in this position: He was tried and convicted. He



was again convicted and is now ready for execution. I therefore ask you to do your duty as law-abiding citizens. I want to say to you that the arm of the law is all powerful if it can have the support of honest men. I know Governor Boyd, and I believe that he is an honest man. He must have had good reason for granting this reprieve. We do not know what showing may have been made to him. There are always two sides to a question, and I believe that we should have patience and trust the man that your ballots have placed in such a high position. You have yet no reason to complain. Wait. You will be protected. Telegrams have been sent, but as yet we have received no answer. You have no reason to doubt yet. I am aware of the fact that the burden of taxation upon you is already heavy—no one knows this better than I—but the expense has already been made. No further expense is to be incurred. I therefore ask you, as honest men, as law-abiding citizens, that you do nothing rash. Let it be said that the law has triumphed in Custer county, and that justice reigns. I thank you.”

During this speech the crowd listened with the most respectful attention, and, seemingly satisfied, began to disperse. Later, however, headed by friends and relatives of the murdered men, and armed with crow bars and a sledge hammer, the crowd, which had now assumed the semblance of a mob, filed into the court house and demanded the keys of the sheriff, but were refused and a scuffle ensued. This was a most critical period, and but for the personal efforts of Judge Wall, who stood in the door of the sheriff's office and with his giant strength kept back the onrushing crowd, commanding them at the same time, in the name of the law, to desist, the sheriff would have been overpowered and the keys secured. At this juncture Judge Hamer, who had been striving to allay the excitement outside, arrived, and mounting a chair, he exhorted and commanded the mob to desist. He assured them no undue effort would be made to prevent the punishment of Haunstine and defended the action of the governor as thoroughly justified under the circumstances; that the prisoner merited death, but let it be meted out to him legally and not by violence in contempt and violation of law. As through sheer exhaustion he discontinued speaking, James Whitehead, who was called for, responded as follows:

“Gentlemen—As you well know, until last April I was a resident of Grant precinct, where this murder was committed. I was well acquainted with Roten and Ashley, whose lives were cruelly taken by the one you now demand shall expiate the penalty of his crime upon the gallows that has been prepared for his execution. They were friends of mine. I had met them in their homes, worked with them in the harvest field, and under different circumstances been

cast into their society. They were men of integrity and good standing in the neighborhood, and I deemed it an honor to have been classed among their friends. Standing here beside me is a near relation of one of the men so foully murdered; behind me is his brother, David Roten, while to the left I recognize a son of Mr. Ashley. These men are honored and respected citizens of Grant township. I cannot blame them that having quietly, as law-abiding citizens, permitted the law, so far, to take its course, they now demand that Haunstine, who desolated their homes and removed their father and brother from their midst, who has caused them untold sorrow and inexpressible anguish of heart, shall here and now meet the punishment he has merited by his unprovoked and diabolical crime. For them now to seek this as a last extreme measure—to take the law into their own hands and see that justice is surely and speedily executed—there is much to be said in palliation. But, gentlemen, for you to do so, while it might hasten, it would not, in my opinion, change the result. This reprieve is only a temporary stay of execution. Haunstine is sure to be hung, and that within the next thirty days; then I beseech you to allow the law to take its course. The honor of our county, the reputation of its citizens, are involved in your action here to-day. Two years ago, while discharging my duty as your representative, I was told in the heat of debate in the legislative halls of this state that the citizens of Custer county are hoodlums and outlaws. I resented the insinuation with all the indignation of one who had faith in the honor and manhood of his people. Now, it rests with you to prove to the people of this great commonwealth that I was correct in my estimation of you; that you are of truth law-abiding citizens. Judge Hamer has promised you that Haunstine shall not be removed from this jail. Sheriff Jones has done the same. Our judge has promised you that he will personally visit the governor and present this case properly to him. Mr. Stockham, who has some acquaintance with Governor Boyd, has also told you he will start in the morning for the state capital. What more do you want? Gentlemen, those of you who live in Grant township, who have known and associated with me, know that it has been my honest endeavor to redeem every promise and fulfill every pledge made you, and I now say, only preserve the patience that has hitherto characterized you for the thirty days' stay fixed by the governor, and if at the end of that time Haunstine is not executed by law, assemble here again, and I promise that I will be one who will assist you in meting out justice to this murderer in your own way and manner. Only do this, and every precinct in the county will be under obligations to make honorable recognition and acknowledgment of the patience, forbearance and law-abiding qualities of the citizens of Grant

township exhibited under the greatest provocation, the most trying circumstances imaginable."

James Stockham, chairman of the county board, was then called for and exhorted the assembled multitude to stand by and vindicate the majesty of the law. "A great crime has been committed, and not unjustly or unreasonably, you now demand that justice shall be visited upon the perpetrator of this crime. This will be done, and done legally under the law. I promise you that I will start to-morrow morning for Lincoln. I will see the governor. Judge Hamer says he will accompany me (Judge Hamer: "I'll be right there") and I have no reason to doubt that when this matter is properly presented to him he will permit the execution to proceed and Haunstine will be hung. I am addressing no mob, but an uprising of the people in their honest indignation, and I doubt not you will listen to reason and let the law be vindicated."

Judge Wall of Loup City, in strong and manly tones, appealed to their sense of right and said: "I have been one to help wring a verdict of guilty from the jury that tried this man two long years ago. But I insist that as law-abiding citizens, you wait until the law shall take its course."

Others spoke. Amid the tumult the reporter was unable to catch their names. With additional assurance from Judge Hamer and Sheriff Jones that the prisoner should not be removed from the county the crowd quietly dispersed and went to their homes.

In an excellently written account of the exciting events that followed the announcement of the governor's reprieve, the *State Journal* thus alluded to the presence of Mrs. Roten, wife of one of the men murdered by Haunstine: "She is a splendid looking woman, but twenty-six years of age, and the mother of four children rendered fatherless by Haunstine's crime. She stood in the very midst of the thickest part of the struggle with a nerve that excited the wonder of all who witnessed the spectacle. The leaders of the mob circled around her, whispering to her for counsel, as if she were their queen, and if she had finally insisted on Haunstine's execution, no power at the command of the sheriff could have prevented them fulfilling her command. The peacemakers besought her earnestly, with every assurance of the justice of the outcome, to ask the men to disperse, but she called attention to the fiendishness of the crime and to her fatherless children as an excuse for refusing to say a word in the culprit's behalf. Failing in this aim, the peacemakers turned their endeavors toward preventing her from giving encouragement to the mob, and succeeded.

With reference to the committee, consisting of Hamer, Stockham and

Whitehead, who waited upon the governor to obtain assurance that no further obstacle would be offered to the execution of the sentence, they were informed that as far as any action of his might be concerned, their trip was utterly useless. He intimated that he proposed to offer no further delay than that provided for in his order of respite, and should not have offered that had he been informed in time of the result of the investigation of Haunstine's alleged insanity.



Execution of Haunstine at Broken Bow.

Thirty days thereafter, at an early hour in the morning, the streets of Broken Bow began to fill with people from the surrounding country to witness the closing ceremonies of the doomed man's career on earth. The center of attraction for the crowd appeared to be the enclosure of rough boards adjoin- the south end of the court house, which hid from public gaze the scaffold from which the murderer was to be dropped into eternity. The doors of the court house were closed against the admission of all except those who had a permit from the sheriff, and a wire fence was placed about the shed containing the scaffold at a distance of about twenty feet. It had been decided to have the



execution at 1 o'clock, but this was not known to the public generally. Accordingly as early as 9 o'clock in the morning the crowd began to gather in order to be on hand when the time came. The scaffold was fenced in by a high board wall. Time wore on slowly until about noon; the crowd gathered until fully 2,000 men, women and children blocked the street on the south side of the court house. Noticeable among the number were many women with babes in their arms. Prominent among those present were many relatives of the men murdered, all eager to witness the doomed man pay the death penalty. We would add here that the relatives of the doomed man were esteemed and highly respected citizens, well known to our people, who sympathized deeply with them in their great trouble, which, through no fault of theirs, had come upon them.

About 12:30 o'clock a thrill of excitement went through the crowd when Eli Roten appeared on the top beam of the scaffold which projected above the fence, and threw a block of wood over into the yard. This was a signal which had, seemingly, been agreed upon, whereupon about fifty men sprang over the wire fence, shoved the guards aside, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the high fence was lying flat on the ground and the gruesome gibbet stood in plain view of everybody. It was a moment of intense excitement, but Sheriff Jones stepped upon the scaffold and exacted of the crowd a solemn promise to remain outside the fence and interfere no further with the proceedings. Haunstine, accompanied by Father Haley and Sheriff Jones, mounted the scaffold. He looked for a moment over the sea of upturned faces and in a full, steady voice, without a tremor, he said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—I desire to ask forgiveness from any one here whom I have offended. I also want you to forgive me for all the trouble and expense I have been to the county. I also ask all to take warning from me, and learn to do right before it is too late. Remember that little things grow into large things and the committing of little sins led me on to the commission of the crime which has brought me where I now stand. Again I ask all to forgive me, and hope you will not neglect to seek salvation."

Father Haley then whispered a few parting words of consolation, pressed the crucifix to the doomed man's lips and placed a cross and a string of beads around his neck, and exactly two minutes before 1 o'clock the trap was sprung. The strain of the shock was too much for the rope, which parted like a thread, letting the unfortunate man fall in a heap to the ground. The second fall broke his neck and in thirteen minutes he was pronounced dead by the physicians in attendance. His body was taken into the sheriff's office, where it was prepared for burial by W. J. Woods, after which it was turned over to his

brother, who, in the silence of the night, took the remains to his home in the southwestern part of the county, where they were quietly interred. Thus ended the tragedy which opened that bright November morning in 1888. It was an impressive, a horrible scene, and one which few who witnessed will ever care to see repeated.

In preparing the above account of the first and only legal execution that has ever taken place in Custer county twelve years after the committal of the crime, we have had access to the records, and from the attorneys engaged have sought additional information; but it is the local papers that so faithfully chronicled the events and daily happenings in the community that we are principally indebted for the details given, prominent among which we mention the Custer Leader, the Republican, Merna Record, Callaway Courier and State Journal.

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## Mike O'Rafferty as a Cowboy.

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"The top o' the mornin' to ye, colonel."

"Good morning, Mike. I am pleased to see you. How are you getting along?"

"Well, sor Oi have turned cowbye. Phwat do ye think o' the loikes o' that at my toime of life?"

"Well, Mike, since I knew you away back in the sixties you have surprised me so often I have kind of gotten used to it. Where have you been?"

"Up in the sand hills northwest of Arnold on the Dismal river wid Dan Haskell, Uncle Swain Finch, Jim Farley, C. F. Cooper, I. P. Olive and some twenty other cowbyes on a ginerall round-up, and was gone exactly thirty days. And such seads of fun as the byes had. Sure an' ye wouldn't belave were Oi to tell ye sor."

"I am not very busy this mornin; perhaps you could give me a nice little description of your trip, and of course you will allow me the privilege of using my judgment when I think you are stretching the blanket a little too tight."

"Well, sor, if ye'll give me a pipe and tobaccy (Oi have a match of me own) Oi am ready to procade."

"All right, here you are."

"Well, our first camp wor on the Dismal river, an' it's rightly named, sor, or me name isn't Mike O'Rafferty. It wor near the North & Cody ranch

(an' while we are spakin' about it, that Bill Cody is a foine lad.) We had just got nicely fixed in the camp when who should come drivin' in but Bill wid a big load of provisions on his mess wagon, wid a barrel of whisky on top, wid a faucet in the side and a tin cup fastened wid a chain. Bill's driver had no more than sthopped till Bill climbed on the sate and shouted: 'Byes, yer humble servant is goin' to furnish free whisky for this here outfit.' Just think o' the loikes o' that, will ye? Did ye iver see annything to bate it?"

"Never did; but what effect did this seem to have on the boys? I suppose they were slow to take advantage of Bill's generosity? They probably insisted on paying him for his whisky, did they not?"

"Sure, an' ye needn't be supposin' annything of the koind, for divil the bit did they sthop to ax anny questions. They sthopped just long enough to take in the manin' o' phwat Bill said. Thin such a yell as them cowbyes let out o' thim would have done credit to Crow Dog's band. One cowbye shouted: 'Three cheers for Buffalo Bill!' and ivery hat in the camp wint up in the air, amid dafenin' ap—ap—noise, an' be the toime the second hooray was given ivery son-of-a-gun had sthampaded for that wagon, hollerin' and tumblin' one over the other loike so manny Texas steers."

"You don't mean to tell me, Mike, you all got drunk?"

"Av coorse not. There was a few of us ould fellows as knew too much for that, an' only took just enough o' the crayther to kape us from takin' could in our jints from shlavin' on the ground. But Oi honestly belave some o' the young bucks would have taken too much if it hadn't been positively fornist the rules of the round-up. Well, sor, we sthaid here about a week, while the cowbyes rode in ivery direction and brought in big bunches of cattle which had to be separated, aich outfit takin' care of its own stock, till we was ready to go to the nixt campin' place. Such oodles of fun as we had, playin' poker at noight and horse racin' whin in the camp in the day time. Here is where yer humble servant and Ould High Knocker shined. Although the ould fellow is gettin' away up in the years, for two hundred yards he still houlds the bilt. Thin we moved to the head wathers of the Middle Loup, where the byes agin scather, an' goin' in a northwesterly direction a long ways make a great discovery, and the cattle men are wild wid joy. They found large, beautiful lakes of wather, and manny foine cattle two and three years old, widout anny brands on thim, as wild as deer and elk, which were to be seen in big droves. This explained the loss to several big outfits the last two or three years. Their cows had sthrayed off up in this lake country, and the ranch men, supposin' this country was a dry desert, had not explored it before. Here, sor, is the place to go if ye want to know what brandin'

mavericks manes. The way the brands were burned into the skins o' these poor bastes you wouldn't belave unless ye saw it. Thin we sthorted to drive our cattle back south, aich man droppin' out wid his bunch as he came to his own range, wid what mavericks he had been able to secure. As we came along down we picked up several white-faced cattle widout calves. Some one remarked that this was a kind of strange. By and by we sees a shmoke risin' over a shmall rise in the prairie and concluded to go over and see phwat koind of a layout we had found. The first thing we seen wor a shmall log house about 14 by 16, and a shmall stable made of logs and covered wid hay, and a corral wid fifteen fine, sleek calves wid white faces. As only one ould cow on a lariat rope could be seen, it looked rather suspicious, colonel."

"Well, what did you do?"

"Well, sor we saw some barefooted youngsters papin' out beyant the corner of the house. Some o' the byes let a big hello out o' them, which brought a tall, lank-lookin' ould granger to the door."

"Hello, ould man; have ye seen anny sthray cattle around here?"

"The ould fellow paped out from undher his ould sthraw hat wid a queer sort o' grin an' says: 'Phwat brand be ye a lookin' for?'"

"The Bar 7, Figure 4, Circle Bar."

"Havn't seen anny," grins the ould man.

"How long have ye lived in here, ould man?"

"Only since last spring."

"Where is yer cattle?"

"Ye don't mane to tell me that is the only cow ye own?"

"Yis."

"Where did ye get all these foine calves?"

"They all belong to that there ould brindle cow, sor. She's raised every wan of them, and I reckon ye'll not find a likelier lot o' calves in a long way."

"Say, ould man, ye can't stuff us; show up yer cattle or we'll make ye."

"Well, gentlemen, I'm ready to go on the stand and swear all them calves belongs to that ould brindle cow."

"Now, colonel, phwat do ye think o' that koind of a cow?"

"In my estimation the old fellow was lying."

"Well, sor, we all knew he wor lyin,' but afther talkin' together we seen we couldn't prove it. Some o' the byes just axed him for fun phwat his politics wor. The ould haythen said he was a middle-of-the-road Pop, and belaved in sixteen to one, but as it was an off year the ould cow didn't quite make it. But he hoped by another year the crap would be better, the ould blackguard. Well, we hadn't seen all the fun yet. On crossin' a divide a shmall bunch of





#### CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

Do wid him? Oh, nothin' at all, 'at all,' excep to trate him to the worst batin' ye iver saw a mon get wid the end of a rawhide rope, and when we left him his own mither wouldn't have known him.



The farmer and his cow that raised fifteen calves in one season.

One of the boys asked him phawt his polleties was. He said he ware a Middle o' the Road Pop and belaved in in sixteen to wan, but it was a kind of off year and did not quite make it.

cattle (which had been missed by the byes as we went north) came runnin' out of a dhrav close by. Cautiously approaching the edge, phwat do you suppose we saw, colonel?"

"Well, really I can't say; what was it?"

"A fellow changin' the brand on a Circle Bar heifer."

"Well, what did you do with him?"

"O, nothin' at all, excep' to trate him to the worst batin' wid the end of a rawhide rope ye iver saw a man get, and when we left his own mother wouldn't have known him, an' I reckon he will not want to thry stalin' cattle again for some toime. When we got to Uncle Swain's, last night, Aunt Sarah had been havin' the devil's own toime. She had been sthayin' at home, wid her dog and cat, lookin' afther the sthock. One noight she had retired as usual, whin all at once she hears a schrapin' and pawin' noise among her milk pans in the cellar. She listens intintly for some toime and nothin' sthirs.

Thin the pawin' and schrapin' begins again. Now, Aunt Sarah is a good housewife and prides herself on kapin' a respectable house, and doesn't propose to have anny midnight thafe a prowlin' among her little sthore of provisions, milk, butther and lard. So shlippin' out o' bed aisy, she lights a tallow candle (the only koind o' light she had) an' sthooops down to raise the thrap door of the cellar, whilst the bangin' an' clattherin' still continues, wid Aunt Sarah gettin' madder and madder ivery minute. She sthops all of a sudden loike, and remimbers she has nothin' to kill the thafe wid whin she finds him. So settin' down her loight she tip toes out, gets the ax an' the pitchfork and lays them down widin rachin' distance, and then procades—"

"Never mind that, Mike. What I am interested in is what was in the cellar."

"Aisy there, now, colonel; that's just phwat I'm gettin' at. Ye see, sor, the cellar wor a hole in the ground about eight fate square, dug sthraight down about six fate undher the cinter of the house. Ye had to descind, not on stair stips, wan below the other, till ye gintly hit the bottom, but ye had to sit down on a flure, swing yer feet into the hole, climb down onto a box, thin jump to the ground. So ye see, sor, the difficulty of gettin' into that cellar."

"I see, Mike; but I am glad we both have plenty of time, or I am afraid we would have to wait until to-morrow to find out what was making it so lively among Aunt Sarah's milk pans."

"Well, sor are ye wondherin' what it wor?"

"Yes."

"Well, sor, that is phwat Aunt Sarah wor doin', gettin' madder ivery minute. She took hould of the ring and gave it a quick yank, held the thrap dhure in wan hand and the loight in the other. Parin' down into the darkness—phwat did she see? At first glance she only saw the darkness. Thin, as her eyes became accustomeds to the surroundins he saw two shmall points like balls of fire movin' around in the cellar. Cautiously lowerin' her candle she wor no longer in doubt as to the identity of the thafe who was walkin' proudly to and fro. Phwat a beautiful crayther, to be sure; black, wid two white sthripes on his back, with a big bushy tail that he carried wid a gal-lantry that would have put to shame manny a more useful animal."

"Well, Mike, if you have done enlogizing the beauty of the skunk, tell me what Aunt Sarah did."

"Well, sor, I suppose ye are wondherin' how Aunt Sarah is goin' to get that shkunk out o' the cellar widout ruinin' her milk an' butther an' every-thing else in it?"

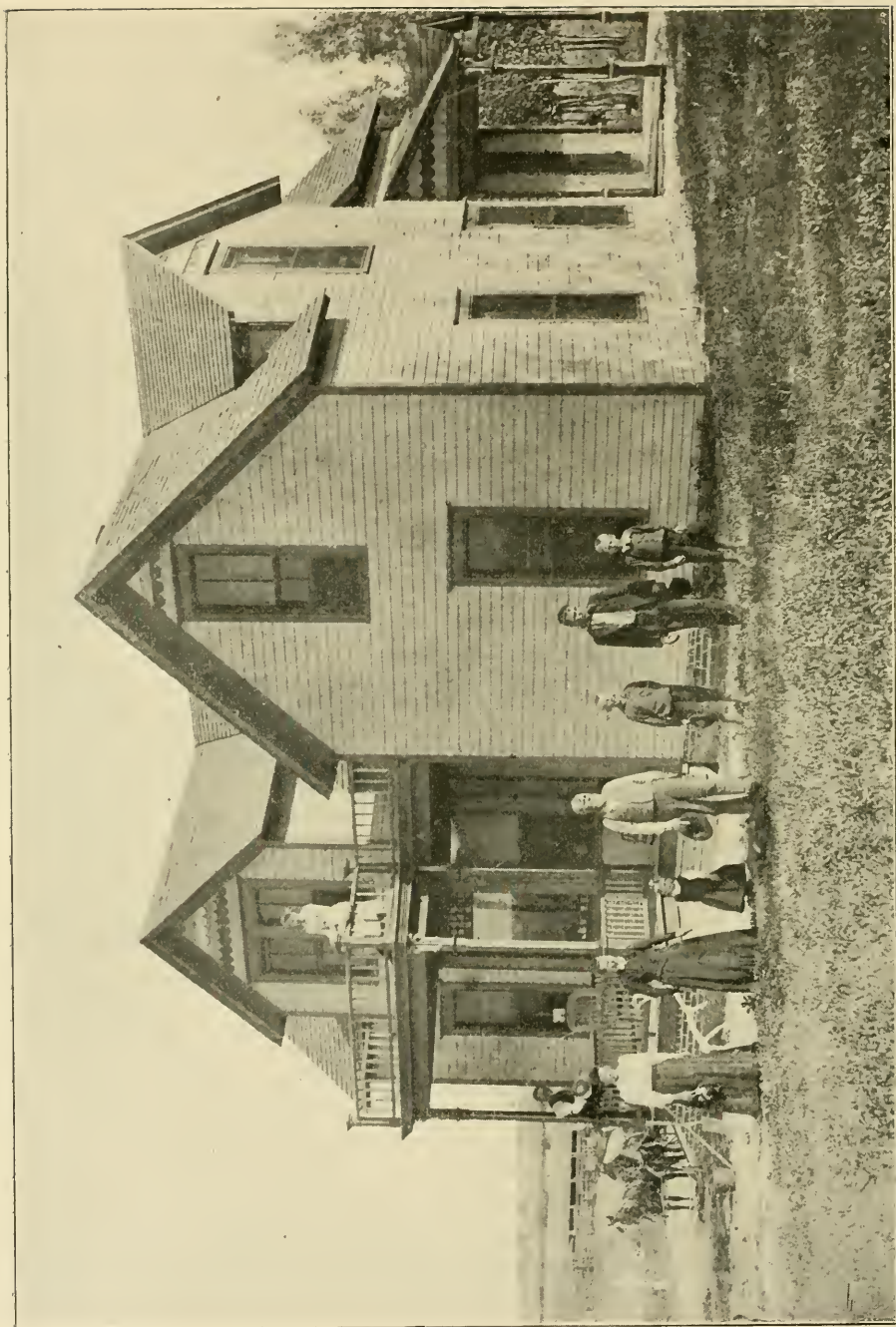
"Yes."

"Well, sor, that is just phwat Aunt Sarah was sayin' to herself. She saw she couldn't use her ax or fork, so finally she wint and got an empty nail keg, tied a sthring to it, and began to fish for the sthriped gintleman by shwingin' it near him so he would jump in and she could haul him up. She found this a very excitin' sport, and an hour had gone by and sthillo Aunt Sarah followed him round wid her keg. Siveral toimes she had the thafe in the keg, but whin she sthartered to pull him up, out the blackguard would jump. Afther another half hour o' this koind o' fun she gives it up and gets a board about eight fate long and comes back to find the little haythen just makin' the dirt fly, diggin' his way back into the cellar wall. 'Bad luck to yez,' says Aunt Sarah; 'if it's goin' to be a foight to the finish wid yes, by gosh, I'll have yer hide.' Dhroppin' down on the box she jumps to the bottom. Houldin' the loight in front of her, she quietly shlips along toward the shpalpeen, who is sthillo busily engaged throwin' dirt. She had placed the boord on a shlant from the bottom of the cellar to the ground undher the house, makin' a sthairs as foine as could be for the thafe to walk out on. She made a little noise to attrract his attintion and slowly approched him. He sthops his diggin', and fastens his little beady eyes on the loight as Aunt Sarah approaches him an inch at a toime, muttherin': 'Ye little divil, Oim thinkin' ye'll not be feelin' so funny whin Oi get through wid yez; yez have got to walk that boord out o' this cellar or my name isn't Sarah Finch.' The loight is now widin three inches of his nose, thin it is widin two inches. Sthillo he houlds his ground, wavin' his big, bushy tail loike a banner, niver once takin' his eyes from the loight. Thin, all of a sudden, phwat do ye think happened, colonel?"

"I do not know," retorts the colonel, excitedly, "unless he turned and ran."

"Divil the bit did he do annything of the koind. Aunt Sarah dipped the candle forwards and burned his nose. Thin the circus comminees. He sphrings backwards, ivery hair on his mane little carcass sthandin' toward his head. He sthands on his hind legs and scratches his burned nose wid his paws. Aunt Sarah chuckles maliciously, as she again approaches wid the candle extinded in front of her. She hisses through her clenched teeth: 'Ye'll foind me roight here to sthay, Mr. Polecat, if ye don't climb that boord.' She warns up to her work and again burns his nose, when he again goes through the schcratchin' process and retreats around the cellar. Another hour passes. Sthillo Aunt Sarah follows her victim, burnin' his nose whiniver the opportunity offers, determined to drive him from the camp. Sometoimes he would walk up the board nearly to the top, thin jump off, the rascal, but





Residence of N. M. Morgan, one of South Loup's many prosperous farmers and cattlemen.

oftener he would pretend not to see it, and go undher it. Aunt Sarah gets bouldher as toime goes by. She crowds the inimy into close quarthers and burns his nose toime afther toime, till she makes it too hot for him and he can sthand it no longer, wid the hair and skin literally burned off his pate. He mounted the boord and fled out in the darkness, wid Aunt Sarah afther him wid the pitchfork. But he was too shwift and escaped, just as the clock sthruke twelve, bein' just four hours since Aunt Sarah discovered the thafe in the cellar. And, sthrange to say, there was no damage done except to the polecat. An phwat do ye think o' that, colonel?"

"Why, I should think it truly wonderful."

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## Callaway.

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George B. Mair.

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I have been asked to write a history of Callaway for Butcher's Pioneer History of Custer County. I find, upon investigation, that most of those who were here in the beginning and who took an active part in the organization of the town have removed to other parts, and that the birth of Callaway, in the minds of the citizens of to-day, is apparently in the dim distant past, a dust-covered tradition. \* \* \* And as an introduction to the history of Callaway, a brief account of the settlement of the territory contiguous may not be out of place.

Probably the first settler to locate in the South Loup valley between the present towns of Callaway and Arnold was Frederick Schreyer, who came in June, 1875, with a large family, and located a claim where he still resides about four miles above Callaway. Mr. Schreyer soon found himself in trouble with the cowboys, who attempted to drive him away. He was a shining mark for practical jokes at the hands of the cowboys, and accepted everything they did to torment him in dead earnest. When they attempted to stampede a herd of cattle over the roof of his dugout, or destroyed his watermelon patch, and such other innocent diversions, Mr. Schreyer positively refused to see the point of the joke.

The next settler to arrive in the valley was David E. Sprouse, who located two miles northwest of the present town of Callaway. In October of

the same year came Ira Graves and George T. Ricker, in search of land, the former filing on a homestead and timber claim adjoining the future town, and the latter locating a mile north of the Spronse claim. Charles C. Kingsbury and Mark Schneringer came about the same time. In 1880 came N. M. Morgan, N. M. Deems, H. B. Schneringer, Noah Welch, Norman Brendle, Gabriel Payton, Ira McConnell, the Whipples, and perhaps others.



George B. Mair, Wife and Daughter.

A postoffice was established in August, 1880, which was given the euphonious name of "Letup," with Ira Graves as postmaster. On petition of Ira Graves and Clara P. Graves the name of the office was changed to Delight in September of the same year. Mark Deems was installed as mail carrier, his route being from Custer to Arnold, and from Olax (now Oconto) to Delight, all of these offices being supplied from Plum Creek.

School district No. 3 was soon organized, comprising all the territory in the southwestern part of the county. The first school house was built of sod and was located at the foot of the hill a mile west of the present town of Callaway. The first election was held at the Goodyear sheep ranch, near the old Finch-Hatton ranch, a short distance above Triumph. The first wedding in the community was that of Miss Lydia M. Graves to Mr. George A. Steele, May 25, 1881, and the first death that of Bennie, adopted son of Mr. and Mrs. Graves, March 17, 1881.

The county was organized into townships in 1883, and the territory embracing the entire southwestern part of the county was named Delight town-



ship by N. M. Morgan, the first supervisor. Out of the original township the towns of Grant, Elim and Wayne have since been formed, leaving the township of Delight with seventy-eight square miles. At the time of the settlement here there was no other settlement between the Platte valley and Victoria creek. During the few years that followed newcomers arrived almost weekly until there was quite a community. In 1885 Mr. Graves induced John



The First Building in Callaway.

Moran, a merchant at Olax, to build a store on his farm, which stood on the northeast corner of the property now owned by John Frederick. The question as to who is entitled to the credit of founding the town of Callaway has been often disputed, and will perhaps never be fully determined to the satisfaction of all, but from what we can learn, J. Woods Smith is fully entitled to whatever honor the distinction confers, as it was in his brain that the scheme originated which materialized in the laying out of the town a few months later. As Mr. Smith tells it, Callaway was first conceived in the lobby of the Paxton hotel at Omaha, in the fall of 1885. While reading the morning paper, he chanced to come across an item stating that the Omaha & Republican Valley railroad was going to survey a line up the South Loup river the next spring, to intersect with another road which was to be surveyed up Wood River valley from Kearney. Mr. Smith went to a map which was hanging on the wall, and at once made up his mind that the point where these two roads came together would be an ideal place for a town. With his usual decision, Mr. Smith had a town laid out and thickly populated—in



his mind—within five minutes. He immediately communicated the scheme to Hon. A. B. Chard, a personal friend, and the two started for Custer county to look over the situation. They found the location even more promising than they had anticipated, and made partial arrangements for the purchase of the Graves farm for a townsite, intending to return early in the spring to complete the deal. When spring came Mr. Chard had other business to attend



P. E. BREGA, Attorney.

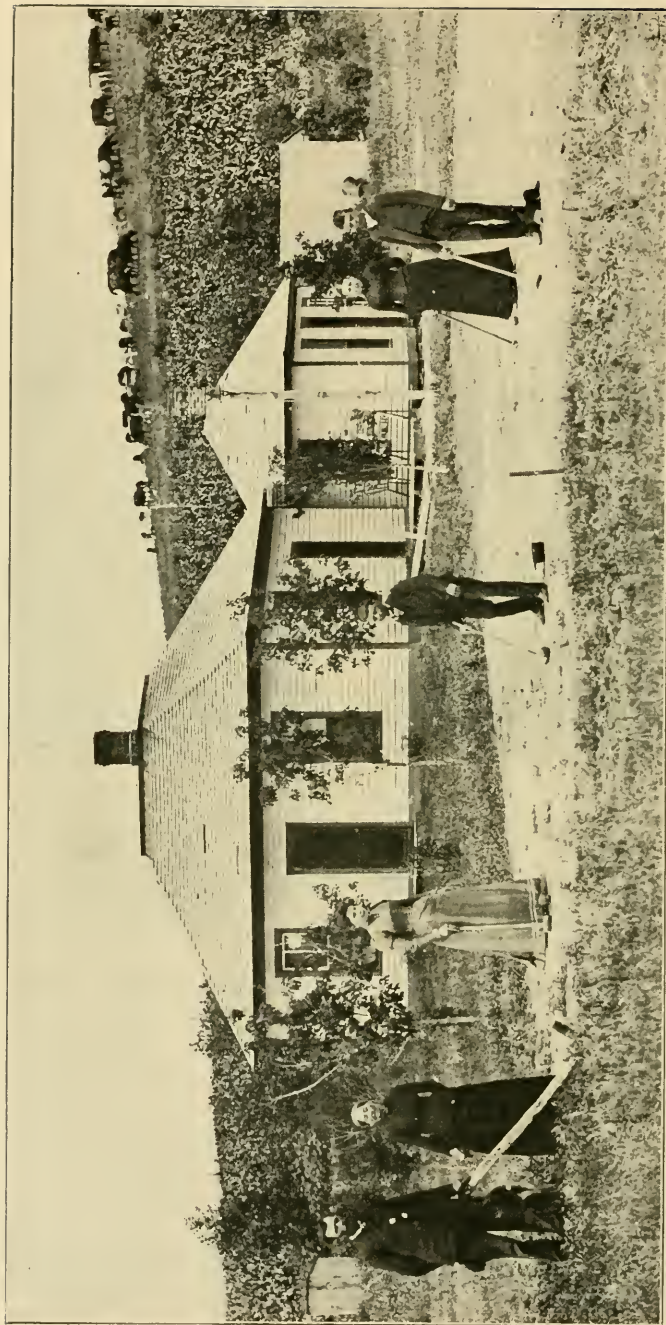


DR. L. MICHEAL.

and Mr. Smith proceeded alone. Upon his return to Delight he was unable to close the deal with Mr. Graves, and he succeeded in making an arrangement whereby the claims of Albert and M. H. Deems, comprising the east half of section 11, township 15, range 23, were secured for a townsite, the Deems' taking shares in the syndicate in payment for their land. Mr. Smith also purchased of C. W. Gray the northwest quarter of section 11 on his own account, which is the land upon which the Railroad addition to Callaway was afterwards platted. E. B. Needham, a capitalist from St. Paul, Nebraska, also took an interest in the townsite company, and the work of platting was commenced at once. The town was named in honor of S. R. Callaway, then general manager of the Union Pacific railroad, and the streets were named after the general officers of that road and the members of the townsite company. The first to erect a building in the new town was Dr. L. Michael, whose photograph and a picture of the building accompany this sketch. The second building was erected by Harry E. O'Neill for his brokerage business, which

heretofore had been conducted on his claim half a mile west of town. The next building was a store by Albert Deems. Then John Moran moved his general store down from the corner of Mr. Graves' farm, Baker & Yates put up a store and put in a stock of groceries, Smith Bros. put up the opera building and put in a stock of hardware. These were followed in quick succession by W. B. Maze, hardware; Smith & Needham, lumber and coal; Maze & Burbank, flour and feed; Rogers & Johnson, the Bank of Callaway; Theron E. Webb, drug store; C. W. Root, drug store, moved from Arnold; Holway & Schneringer, livery; L. Palmer, feed stable; Lewis & Holman, meat market; M. L. Savage, furniture store; Clark & Owens, real estate, loans and insurance; B. L. Brisbane, real estate; C. C. Hayes, James Suhr, blacksmiths; Alex. Mallert, G. A. James, restaurants; P. Wymore, John Calligan, McDonald & King, Tidey & Smea, carpenters; F. A. Clarke & Co., general store, moved from Arnold; M. H. Deems, Hotel Excelsior, operated by A. L. Mathews; J. C. Naylor, lawyer; George H. Lafleur, barber shop. On August 19th the first issue of the Callaway Standard appeared, which was published and edited by Charles A. Sherwood, a first-class printer imported by the townsite syndicate. On Sunday, August 8th, a small hurricane swept down the valley and partially wrecked most of the buildings that were in the course of construction, among them being the opera house, Dean's hotel, the Baker & Yates building, but the damages were soon repaired and work progressed rapidly. The new town boomed all summer. J. Woods Smith, its founder and promoter, was well known all over the state. He also had the knack of getting himself interviewed in the Omaha papers every time he visited that city, and the result was, Callaway was soon the best advertised town in Nebraska. While to the ordinary individual Callaway appeared destined to become a prosperous little village, in the Utopian vision of J. Woods Smith nothing less than the state capital awaited it.

During the summer of 1886 the Omaha Bee said: "Callaway is six weeks old, with fifty houses, a hotel, 78 by 56 feet, an opera house, 48 by 60 feet, and a population of 200 inhabitants. Its representation in business houses is excellent, though at present in need of a watchmaker and jeweler and a harness man. A first class outfit for a new paper to be called the 'Callaway Standard,' together with an editor, have already been shipped, and the first sheet of the new journal will appear next week. It will be followed by the issue of a rival paper one week later. The crops in the vicinity are said to be the finest in the state, and Mr. Smith says that he has never seen finer corn than they are now cutting down on the site upon which the town is built."

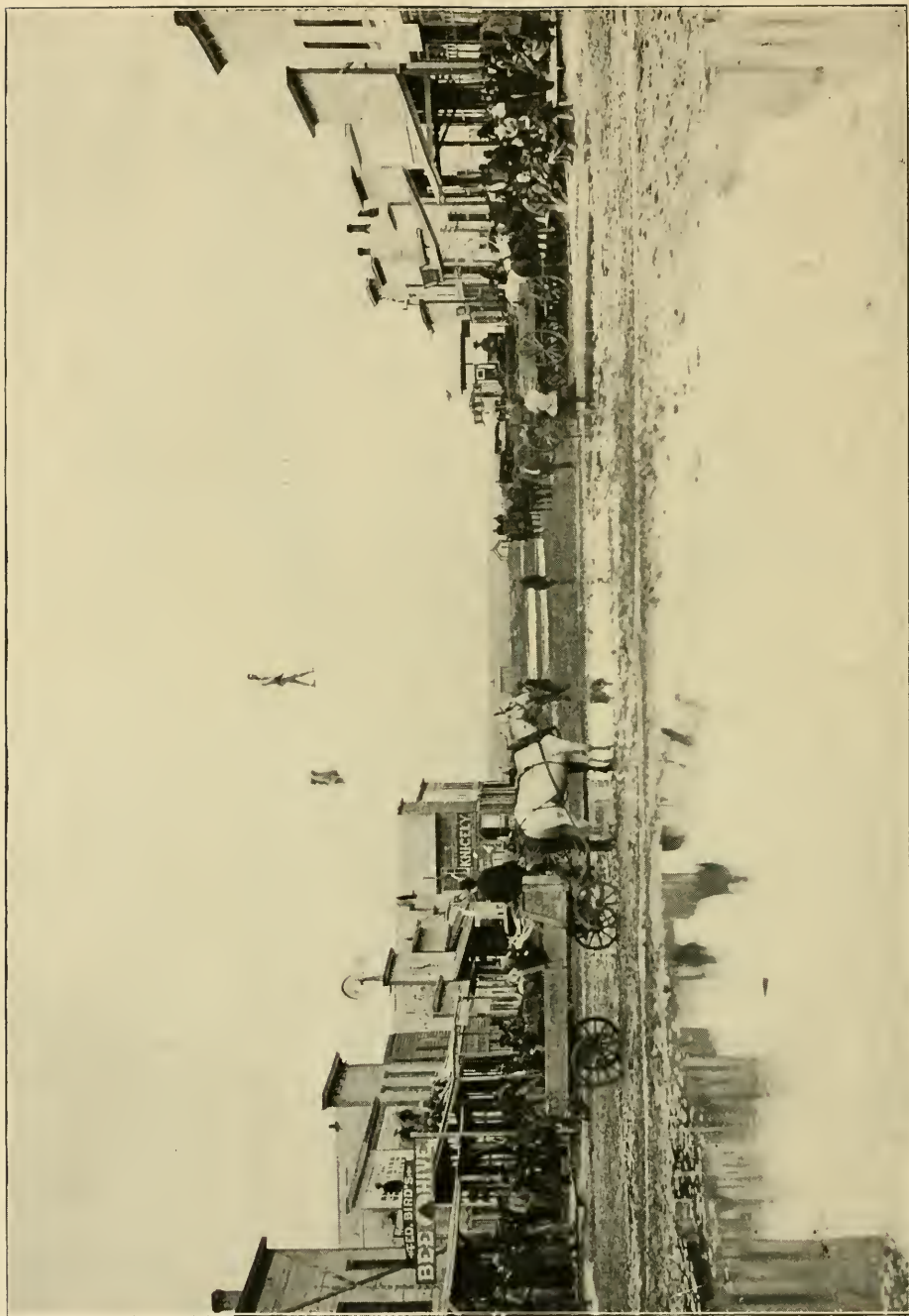


Wm. Engles at home. No one can for a minute doubt this after looking at this picture. Mr. Engles is one of the old pioneers of Triumph Township, and has done much to help build up this part of Custer County.



The survey of the road was completed that summer and the grading done. The grade is still there, from Pleasanton to Callaway, but no iron has ever been laid on it. The Wood river line was graded soon after, but it was not until four years after, that the road was finished from Kearney to Callaway. This scheme materialized in the formation of the New Callaway Townsite and Improvement Company, with C. W. H. Luebbert, president; N. M. Morgan, vice president; Harry E. O'Neill, secretary, Ira Graves, treasurer; John Reese, solicitor. The land was purchased of Ira Graves, the site of New Callaway platted, and inducements offered to old town business men to move up, as it was expected that the New Callaway promoters had influence enough to secure the depot. The inducements, however, did not draw any of the old town people away, except Harry O'Neill. Upon the organization of Callaway the postoffice had been moved from Mr. Graves' farm to town, and the name changed from Delight to Callaway. Harry O'Neill was postmaster when he moved up to the new town, but he had to leave the postoffice behind. The old town citizens patrolled the streets at night with shotguns to prevent the office from being stolen. A newspaper plant was purchased by the New Callaway Syndicate, and on June 29th, 1887, the New Callaway Courier was born in a frame building which was then located near the present residence of John Frederick, with W. C. McMiller as editor. Then commenced one of the biggest townsite fights in the history of central Nebraska. The new town was derisively christened "Podunk" by the old town people, and the New Callawayites were termed "Mudhens." The failure of the Wood river line to be built that fall put somewhat of a damper on the New Callaway project. The few residents of the town who had been induced to locate with the understanding that it was to have the railroad depot at once, became discouraged and moved away. In October, 1887, when the writer first arrived on the scene from Chicago to assume charge of the New Callaway Courier, he found the two rival towns lying on their arms awaiting developments. Every business enterprise in New Callaway had gone away except the Courier, but it was doing a flourishing business. It was published in the frame building now occupied as a photograph gallery by Isaac Bryner. It was then located on the corner of Pearl street and Third avenue, New Callaway. On the corner diagonally across the street was a gopher hole, and the two other corners were occupied by a bullfrog and another gopher. The Courier had a big circulation, and was well filled with advertisements from merchants of Broken Bow, Cozad, Plum Creek and Arnold; but it had none from Callaway, as that would have been considered high treason by the old town people, and would have been sufficient reason for a boycott against the offender. The Courier, how-





Callaway, after a small shower, with a rope walker giving an exhibition.

ever, did a flourishing business, and became famous all over this part of the state as the paper that was published in the town that had no other business. During the winter of 1887 the weather was very cold, and as coal had to be hauled from Cozad, there was sometimes a dearth of fuel. The office building was made of boards that were mostly knot holes, and unplastered, consequently not over warm, and the paper was not unfrequently "run off" when the temperature on the outside was below zero, and not much higher inside. It was frequently the duty of the editor to sally forth after dark into some



A mixed train on the Kearney and Black Hills branch of the Union Pacific.  
The present terminus is Callaway. Oct. 7, 1890.

handy cornfield with a two bushel sack to rustle enough fuel for the next day. One day a man whose field had been visited pretty often came into the office and wanted to know how much it would cost to have a notice put in the paper. He said somebody was stealing his corn and he thought a piece in the paper would scare them off. We made a deal to publish a warning against the offender for a dollar and a half, and no more corn was stolen from that field during the remainder of the winter. This shows the power of advertising.

During 1888 M. L. Savage built the present postoffice building. The Seven Valleys' Bank building was also built the same year, as was also a new store by F. A. Clark & Co. The Seven Valleys Bank had been established the year previous by J. Woods Smith and others. The Union Bank was established in 1888 by J. Woods Smith, J. E. Decker and J. H. Decker. The spring of 1889 came, and still no railroad. The town was at a standstill. The New Callaway project was practically dead and the New Callaway Courier moved

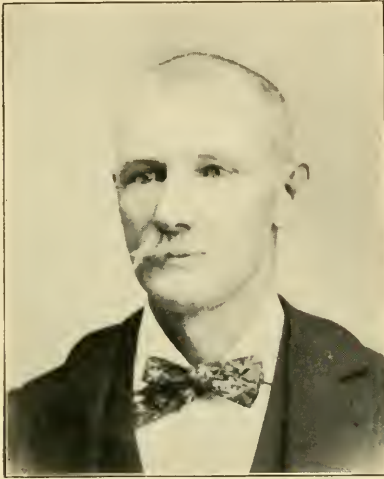


H. H. Andrews doing business in his bank vault after the late fire in Callaway. Showing Western push and energy.

to the old town and became the Callaway Courier. George B. Mair, the editor and publisher, was appointed postmaster, purchased the postoffice building and added another room which has since been used as a printing office. R. E. Brega came to the town during this year and established himself in the law business. Railroad rumors were rife and the Kearney & Black Hills Railroad Company was organized.

The magnificent water power afforded by the South Loup river had commended itself to the business men of Callaway, and many meetings were held to talk up the project of erecting a flouring mill, to be operated by water power. These meetings resulted in the formation of the Callaway

Milling and Manufacturing Company, which was composed of most of the business men. Work was commenced on the dam across the Loup river in the fall of 1889, and the wheels of an up-to-date, modern roller mill began to move in the spring of 1890. A proposition to vote \$8,600 bonds for the purpose of assisting the Kearney & Black Hills railroad to build from Kearney to Callaway was submitted to the township and carried almost unanimously. Work on the old right of way commenced at once, and on the 7th day of



DR. R. R. BAKER.



F. CONLEY.

October, 1890, the first regular passenger train pulled into Callaway. The depot was located neither in the old town nor the new, but half way between, on the farm of J. Woods Smith, which was purchased by the Callaway Improvement Company on which to lay out a new town of Callaway, now known as the Railroad addition. Engineers of the railroad company laid out the town on a grand scale, large enough for a city of the first-class, and some very good buildings were put up, among them being the Grand Pacific hotel at a cost of over \$10,000. A number of business enterprises located in the new town, and liberal inducements were held out to the old town to move up in a body. It was supposed that the location of the depot would cause everything to rush to the Railroad addition at once, but such was not the case. Many of the old town people were interested in old town real estate, and if the town moved to the new addition it would become practically worthless. It was evident to a disinterested onlooker that the Railroad addition was



bound to win in the end, but the old town people made a bitter fight. J. Woods Smith, being interested in the new town, moved his opera house building over and also established a store there in what was known as the Improvement building. Vangreen Bros. moved up to the new town. A new drug store was established with Dr. F. J. Greer as manager, Dierks Bros. and the Gilcrest Lumber Company put in yards, a brickyard was established, and a large two-story building known as the Grand Army building was



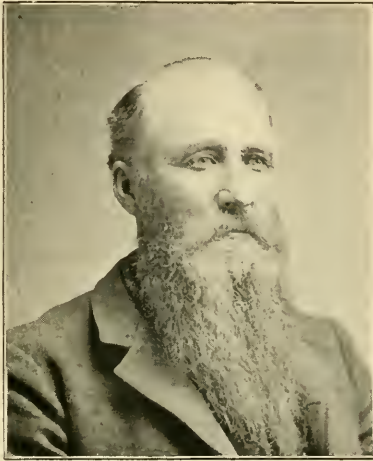
J. WOODS SMITH



DR. A. L. MATHEWS.

erected for store and lodge purposes. The many newcomers who were attracted to the locality by the advent of the railroad were not, of course, interested in the townsite fight, and mostly located in the new town. Being satisfied that there was but one way for the contest to end, and wishing to bring it to a close as soon as possible, the postoffice was moved to the new town at midnight by G. B. Mair without previous notice. The following morning, when the people of the old town found out what had happened their wrath knew no bounds and all sorts of threats were indulged in. The Courier was moved to the new town at the same time. So incensed were they, that the people of the old town refused to mail their letters at the postoffice, but sent them to the neighboring offices to be mailed. At the arrival of every mail they sent a messenger up to the postoffice with a sack, who collected all the mail for the old town business men and carried it down to the Bank of Callaway, where it was redistributed. In the meantime they were procuring sig

natures to a petition and protest which was forwarded to the Postoffice Department, which brought a postoffice inspector to investigate. The inspector concluded that the postmaster had acted without due authority in moving the office, and his resignation was asked for. This the postmaster declined to do, and he was removed and a temporary postmaster appointed by the inspector, pending the final decision of the postmaster general. In a few months the department reinstated the postmaster, but the location of the office was



MILO YOUNG



ROY BARNARD

fixed in the old town, whither it had been taken by the inspector at the time of his visit. Soon after this the entire old town capitulated and moved up to the new town, followed by the postoffice some months later. The year 1891 was a season of big crops and the new town enjoyed quite a boom. Money was plenty and the business men had a fine trade. Many new buildings were erected, among them being two large grain elevators. The town was full of traveling men and strangers, and the townsite syndicate had succeeded in interesting a number of eastern capitalists in the town. Arrangements had been made for a big excursion at some future date, but in the meantime poor crops and partial failures followed, culminating in the drought period of 1894-5, which drove away half the population of the state, and in which Callaway dwindled down from a hustling town of 600 people to a dead village of a little over 200. The people became almost panic stricken, and a cry went out for help that was responded to from ocean to ocean with a generosity that has

never been equaled. Grain, food and goods of all kinds came into the county by the carloads from almost every state in the Union, and serious suffering was prevented. The railroads, which had been said to have no souls, disproved the assertion at this time, and they gladly offered free transportation for solicitors and supplies during all that trying period. Since then this locality has enjoyed fair crops. On the night of March 15, 1901, the principal business block was completely destroyed, entailing a loss of about \$50,000. This has resulted in the passage of a fire limits ordinance by the village board, and preparations are already being made to rebuild the burned district with fine modern brick buildings.

Following are the principal business enterprises of Callaway at the present time: General merchants, John Moran, Selby & Banks, Vangreen & Baker, George O. Bengier, D. L. Hopkins, P. K. Winther, J. W. Powell; hardware and furniture, Bengier & Decker, F. B. Harrington; meat market, W. E. Shupp, George H. Lafleur; drugs, Ira C. Shupp; Grand Pacific hotel, R. D. Ewings; restaurant, James Oliver; photographer, picture frames and notions, Isaac Bryner; milliner, Lillian Idell; blacksmiths, J. H. Evans, L. Anderson; Dierks Lumber and Coal Company; J. D. Wieland, agent, agricultural implements; Gilcrest Lumber and Coal Co., D. Andrews, agent; Bengier & Decker, hardware; Charles B. Drum, harness maker and shoe repairing; F. J. Drum, well machinery; grain dealers, Omaha Elevator Company, A. J. Higbee, agent; Pacific Grain Company, J. H. Chapman, manager; live stock dealers, John Frederick, Willard Mathews; newspapers, Courier, Mair & Barnard, publishers; Tribune, F. W. Conly, publisher; printing office, Mair & Barnard; lawyer, R. E. Brega, real estate and insurance; H. H. Andrews, F. W. Zumbrunn, W. H. Phillips; barber, Charles Moak; physicians, A. L. Mathews, F. J. Greer, Thomas Vallier; contractors and builders, P. Wymore, C. I. Hall; livery stables, C. M. Brittan, B. McDonald, H. E. Greer; Seven Valleys Bank, T. Norbury president, W. Tyson cashier; flouring mills, Callaway Milling and Manufacturing Company, F. L. Haycock, manager; jewelry and watch repairing, George Greer; postmaster, J. J. Douglass. R. M. Grimes is agent for the Kearney & Black Hills railroad, of which Callaway is the terminus. Callaway has first-class telephone connection with all the surrounding towns and a company has just been organized to put in a local system. Three churches, the Episcopal, the Methodist and the United Evangelical, provide for the spiritual wants of the community, while the cause of education is well attended to through the medium of a good public school system, of which Professor Robert Thomson is the present efficient superintendent.

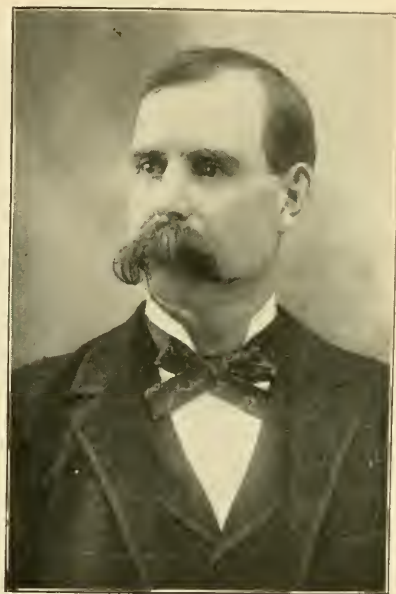
## Ansley.

Tom Wright.

Ansley is an enterprising village of 500 inhabitants on the Grand Island & Wyoming Central railroad, cosily nestled between rough-chiseled hills, in the most beautiful and fertile valley in the southeastern portion of Custer



TOM WRIGHT, Editor Chronicle.



J. H. KERR.

county. The first settlement in the village was made in the summer of 1886, and it has steadily grown, in spite of adversities, until it now stands as a monument to the personal worth and energy of its citizens. As a result of their enterprise the city can boast of having electric lights, water works, the largest and most commodious public hall in Custer county, three handsome churches and a fine school house.

The religious denominations are represented by the Methodists, Christians and Presbyterians, each of which owns neat and commodious buildings free





M. E. Church, Ansley.

from incumbrance. The early history of the M. E. Church in Ansley is not very well known. The Ansley church is the outgrowth of what was once the Algernon circuit. As nearly as can be found out, the change was made some



Christian Church, Ansley.

time during the pastorate of Rev. D. M. Ellsworth, and Ansley became the head of the charge, including Berwyn and Mason City. At that time there were but few Methodists in the community. Some time during the year 1890 the citizens of Ansley formulated the plan of erecting a Methodist church. The outcome of that plan is our beautiful church edifice, 30 by 50 feet in size, heated by furnace and lighted by electricity. Rev. Ellsworth was superseded by Rev. Francis Brock, who served as pastor for two years, when the conference stationed B. T. Peck at Ansley. Rev. Peck remained something over a year, when, at the following session of the annual conference, Rev. L. W.

Chandler was sent to the Ansley work. Rev. Chandler was a most successful man in many ways, building up the church in ways that it had not before been built up. Under his supervision the Epworth and Junior leagues were organized and did efficient work. While the membership was not large, it was active. Rev. Alfred Gilson followed Rev. Chandler. Rev. Gilson was followed by W. H. Forsyth. The present pastor is Rev. M. H. Foutch.



E. G. TAYLOR.



MRS. E. G. TAYLOR.

The Christian church was founded in 1890, commencing with the small membership of sixteen. In 1892 the church was built and dedicated the latter part of August. The seating capacity is 350, and the cost of the structure was \$3,000. The first pastor was Rev. Hedges. He was succeeded by Rev. Fred Hagin. Rev. Sherman Hill followed Rev. Hagin. He was superceded by Rev. Walker and Rev. George Bailey. The present pastor is Jesse R. Teagarden.

The Presbyterian church was the first church erected in Ansley. It was built in the spring of 1887 and dedicated in July of the same year, Rev. Sexton of Seward officiating. The first pastor was Rev. Doremus. Being the only church it was used by all denominations until each was able to erect a church edifice of its own. Several ministers, whose names I have been unable to learn, tended and cared for the flock until 1893, when Rev. Mitchelmore became pastor. He was the minister until the spring of 1894, when the church, on account of the drought, could not support a pastor. The church stood vacant until two or three years ago, when the few scattered members





Public School, Ansley.

rallied and reorganized, and ever since they have had a pastor in the person of Rev. Paul Naylor. The Baptists hold their services in this church, but are formulating plans to build one of their own.

I would certainly feel that I had not done justice to Ansley were I to omit giving a brief description of the Modern Woodmen hall. It is a handsome structure, 36 by 84 feet on the ground. The lower story is conveniently arranged with dining room and kitchen, and a large room for general purposes. The second story is the opera house, with porch and vestibule, two reception rooms and a large audience room with seating capacity of 400. Over the reception rooms is a gallery with a seating capacity of over 150. The stage scenery is superb, the work being done by a first-class artist at a considerable cost. It is lighted with acetyline gas.

Our school house is a two-story frame structure, conspicuously located on an elevation east of the village. It was one of the first public buildings erected in the village. It has accommodation for over 200 pupils, and has four teachers who are kept constantly employed. The course of study requires





Residence of J. C. Stevens, Ansley, 1887.



Flouring Mill, Ansley.

eleven years and its graduates are fitted, upon leaving, to enter any of the seminaries in the United States.

The business houses and most of the private residences are lighted by electricity furnished by the Ansley Electric Light and Power Company. A large flouring mill is in operation adjoining the limits of the village supplying the necessary flour for its inhabitants and also providing a market for the grain.

Previous to the year 1886 there was nothing to mark the spot where Ansley is now located. The land was purchased from a ranchman by the name of Anthony Wilkinson by the Lincoln Land Company and platted for a town. The town was named Ansley in honor of a lady by that name who invested considerable money in real estate, such as lots, in the newly laid out town. Therefore, as before stated, the first settlement was made in the year 1886. The first frame building erected was occupied by a lawyer by the name of George Snell. That building is still a portion of the business part of town and is now occupied by a physician. The school building that appeared on the bleak, uncultivated prairie was moved from Westerville, seven miles distant, by Edgar Varney, who still owns the building. It has been remodeled and is at the present time used as a billiard hall. The next building was a hotel



Residence of B. J. Tierney.

known as the Vansant house, but is now the Cottage hotel. The building now occupied by Mrs. R. J. Tierney as a drug store, then owned by Samuel Royds, was next erected, followed by both banks, the stores of E. H. Burrows and A. H. Shepard and the Jones hotel. Other buildings followed in quick succession. The residences built in the year 1886 were those of J. W. Comstock and Mrs. Abbey, and a few others. The residences of E. H. Gaines and Dan Hagan were built in 1887, and the handsome residence of C. J. Stevens in 1888. Many other residences followed rapidly. Among the first settlers who are still residents are A. H. Turpen, O. P. Allphin, Mrs. H. Stevenson, C. J. Stevens, E. H. Burrows, D. A. Vansant, Mrs. B. J. Tierney, Edgar Varney, Thomas Blowers, A. H. Shepard, C. M. Dorr, James Davis, Mrs. F. E. Gosselin, A. L. Butler and E. A. Butler. The above are the only original settlers, as given to us, who now reside in the city. E. H. Burrows, one of the first settlers in this village, and now one of our leading business men, relates his experiences in the following paragraphs:

"I first struck the town in the middle of May, 1886. At that time there was a tent and a wagon load of lumber to mark the spot where the future metropolis of the southeastern part of Custer county was to be. I selected my lot for a building site at that time and went back east for a while to await





Residence of E. H. Burrows.

developments, returning about the 7th of July. On my return I found more tents, more lumber on the ground, and a few shanties in course of erection. We were compelled to haul our lumber for building purposes, by wagon, from Kearney, over sixty miles, which brought the price of six-dollar-a-thousand knot holes up to the price of 'B' select. While staying at Ansley this time I boarded at the West End hotel, a fine structure built of 'B' select knot holes, size 12 by 14 feet, one story, one room, which answered for kitchen, dining room, office, parlor, bath room and bed room. Everybody was good-natured and the landlord expected his guests to 'double up' every night with whoever he saw fit to assign with us, and at the first peep o' day the clerk would come and shake us, saying: 'Time to roll off them tables; the girls want to set the tables for breakfast,' with which request we cheerfully complied, pulling on our shoes as quickly as possible, went out doors and leaned against the knot holes until the bell rang for breakfast. We sat up to the table and the waiter called out from the kitchen: 'Tea or coffee,





Residence of A. H. Shepard, Ansley.

which, you fellers on the north end?' and of course we said coffee, because it had more body than the tea, which prevented us from seeing what was floating about between the bottom and top of the cup. The waiter brought in a plate of hot biscuits and another with eggs and bacon, set them on the table and said: 'Now, boys, help yourselves.' We waited for some time, wondering if we were expected to use our hands for plates and our fingers for knives and forks. We finally asked the waiter if that was the intention. He replied: 'Come off the dump! Shoo! Shoo! Shoo! There is your tableware.' And sure enough there it was. We had failed to remove the cover of fat, saucy flies that had taken possession of our plates as if they had expected to be waited upon first. Such was my first experience living in Ansley. When I arrived the third time, what a change a short period of four or five weeks had made. From a brown prairie to a busy village. I found about twenty buildings in different stages of erection, my own among

them, which was partly inclosed. I scraped a lot of shavings together, spread down my blankets and slept under my own vine and fig tree. But, alas! not alone. After I fell asleep I dreamed that I was a boy again and went down to the creek to take a swim, and just as I was ready to take a plunge into the water I fell backwards into a bunch of nettles. I awoke, and as soon as I got myself located I realized it was not nettles, but fleas."

The business interests of Ansley are represented by four general stores, conducted by E. H. Burrows, C. J. Stevens, A. H. Shepard and A. W. Hawk; three hardware and implement stores, by E. H. Gaines, J. H. Kerr and Butler & Hiser; one bank, C. J. Stevens presiden, T. C. Gibson cashier; three drug stores, C. R. Hare, Mrs. B. J. Tierney, O. P. Alpine; three milliners, Mrs. E. H. Burrows, Miss Anna Simpson, Mrs. C. B. Quinn; two hotels, Tony Hildebrand, W. Lewis; two butchers, John Davis, Norton Amsberry; one newspaper, the Chronicle, Tom Wright, editor and proprietor; one furniture store and undertaking establishment, Mrs. F. E. Gosselin; one lawyer, Judson C. Porter; two lumber yards, Dierks Bros., Foster & Smith; one restaurant, A. L. Butler; one barber shop, A. H. Turpen; one jeweler and optician, Roy Thompson; two blacksmith shops, C. M. Horr, Matt Harris; two physicians, W. R. Young, E. A. Hanna; two grain elevators, Tierney & Wirt, Central Granary Company; one creamery, owned by a stock company; one general repair shop, F. W. Carlin; two pump and windmill establishments, O. H. Conrad, Hiram Curtis; one harness shop, J. W. Comstock; one news depot, Miss Janet Stevenson; three livery and feed stables, Alex Moore, Joel Lanum, Quinn & Cox; one stock buyer, B. J. Tierney; two carpenters, A. P. Hoover, O. B. Jenkins; one carriage and wagon shop, William Burdett; one flouring mill, C. J. Stevens proprietor; postmaster, T. T. Varney.

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## Sargent.

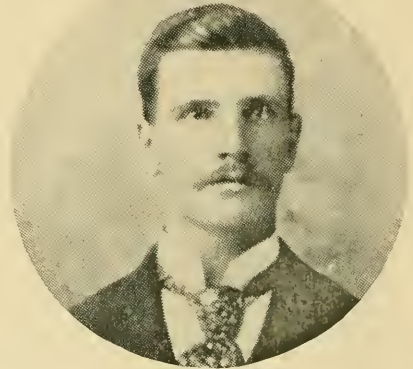
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Sargent is a bustling village of over 300 inhabitants, situated in the northeastern part of Custer county in the midst of a fine agricultural and stock raising district. It is located on the north side of the Middle Loup river, about one mile from that stream. Sargent is one of the oldest towns in the county, having been laid out in 1883. The first bank in the county was located here. The first building erected was the general store of J. K. Spacht, in the summer of 1883, and the location was the middle of a field of

wheat. The town grew quite rapidly and was particularly lively in the summer of 1888, when the B. & M. railroad grade was built, and it was expected that the cars would be running into the town that fall. Owing to a big strike on the system the road was not completed at that time. The drought years of the early '90's caused the town to dwindle down to a mere shadow of its former self. In the fall of 1899, however, the track was laid from Arcadia to Sargent, making the latter the terminus, and since that time the town has



J. C. L. Wisley, Wife and Daughter Eva.



A. H. Barks, Editor Leader.

had a very substantial growth. The Independent Telephone Company of Broken Bow extended its line to Sargent in the fall of 1900. The same fall a fine, two-story frame school building was erected, which now houses one of the best schools in the county under the charge of three teachers. Sargent has two churches, the Congregational and the Methodist. It has several fine business blocks, two newspapers, two banks, two grain elevators, a creamery, with other lines of business well represented. Following is a complete business directory of the town at this time, March 8, 1901:

Armstrong, D. E., windmills, pumps and repairs; Austin, J. S., Racket store, general merchandise; Barstow & Perrin, hardware, paints and harvesting goods; Bridgford, Ben, druggist, R. W. Hicks manager. Mr. B. is an old pioneer and came to Mason City in 1886 with a drug store, which he run seven years, and now is located at Ord, Nebraska; Brown, M. F., contractor and builder; Brumbaugh, G. W., Commercial hotel and livery; Brown, E. R., Windsor hotel; Beers, Robert, contractor and builder; Currie Grain Company, grain and coal; Custer County Bank, James Haggerty president, Charles C. Gardner cashier; does a general banking business; Charles C. Gardner also

postmaster and local agent for telephone line; Cropper, W. T., farm machinery; creamery, Beatrice Creamery Company proprietor; Conhiser & Haggerty, general merchandise and groceries; Davis & Co., furniture, carpets and undertaking goods; Dierks Lumber and Coal Company, lumber, coal and building material, Frank Phillips manager; Fenstermacher, C. H., physician and



Custer County Bank.  
Jas. Haggerty, President. Chas. Gardner, Cashier.

surgeon; Freeman, Charles, liquors and cigars; Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, A. P. Cully president, Charles Nicolai cashier, does a general banking business; Graham, J. H., dentist; Geiser & Swanson, farm implements and hardware; Groff, Mrs. H., restaurant; Hendrickson, Charles, billiard hall; Harris, C. L., contractor and builder; Jaques & Barstow, grain and coal; Leader, newspaper, A. H. Barks editor and proprietor; Leininger, P. H., live stock; Little & Co., Farmers' Meat Market; McGregor Bros., blacksmiths; Morris, Miss Gertrude, dressmaker; Mitchell, R. J., groceries, successor to B. W. Sullivan; Nelson, W. H., painter and paper hanger; Olson T., restaurant; Perrin hotel, S. L. Perrin proprietor; Parks, C. W., live stock, successor to Parks & Cram; Pizer, J. B., New York store; Savage, E. P., real estate and insurance, agent Lincoln Land Company; Savage Bros., Star Livery Barn; Saunders, Walter, shoe and harness shop, general merchandise; Spacht & Lakeman, groceries and general merchandise; Saville, F. N., City Barber Shop; Scriber, L. A., liquors and cigars; Semler, J. D., City Meat Market; Shaw, D. M., brick mason and plasterer; The New Era newspaper and job office, J. C. L. Wisely editor and proprietor; Toliver, John, auctioneer and sales-





First Furniture Store in Custer County, owned by J. H. Brandenburg.

man, restaurant and bakery; Tobias, A. A., jeweler and optician; Troxell & Johnson, hardware; Waynick, I. W., druggist, physician and surgeon; Werber, Rudolph, harness shop; R. H. Monroe, agent for the B. & M. railroad and Adams Express Company; Rev. Lesle, pastor of the M. E. Church; Rev. Jones, pastor of the Congregational church; Professor H. H. Hiatt, principal of the Sargent schools, his assistants being Miss Mamie Cooper and Miss Nightengale.

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## Early Experiences in Sargent Precinct.

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F. M. Morris.

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F. M. Morris, I. W. Morton and R. W. Fulton were the first permanent settlers in Sargent precinct, north of the present village of Sargent, although the claims afterwards taken by Morris and Norton had been entered some eighteen months before by parties of a suspicious character who had built a dugout on the Norton claim, digging into a ridge which comes out of the bluffs facing south on the Middle Loup valley, and so cunningly concealed by

roofing it with sod, grass side up, that one could hardly recognize it as a habitation. Fifty yards from this dugout they had two tunnels leading through the hill back to two stables secreted in a canon full of ash timber and plum brush, and it was supposed they belonged to a band of outlaws who were engaged in the occupation of stealing horses. When the claim was contested none of the parties appeared to make any defense.



J. H. BRANDENBURY.

David Groff, his wife and sons, had preceded these settlers about four years, locating in the east end of the precinct in 1874, the three men referred to above locating on July 4, 1878. H. P. Smith and Mortimer Lewis located in October of the same year.

Mr. Morris had some wheat stored at the Milford mill, near Ord, thirty miles distant, in the winter of 1880. One day he started to the mill, leaving only a few pounds of flour in the house. When he reached the mill he found the dam washed out, and not being able to exchange any of his wheat for flour, he took it to the Sweetwater mill on Beaver creek, near where Ravenna

now is. This dam was also washed away, and he had to travel for eleven miles up the stream to find a crossing place, and then eleven miles back on the opposite side of the creek, in order to get on the road to Gibson, in Buffalo county, eighteen miles from Sweetwater, where there was also a mill. When he arrived at Gibbon the miller informed him that they were four days behind with their work, and that it would be impossible for him to



Residence of Mr. Plymale.

get any flour inside of that time. Mr. Morris told the miller that he was eighty miles from home and that his family was without flour or meal, but the miller positively told him he could not do any grinding for him for four days. Mr. Morris was a very large man, and, swelling himself up until he was considerably larger than even his natural size, he told the miller that he was going to feed his team and that if his grist was not ready in the morning there was going to be trouble. The miller evidently thought he had struck a pretty tough customer, for when Morris went to the mill in the morning he found the man emptying his flour into his sacks. Morris and another homesteader who had been to mill started home together, having but one loaf of bread between them. When they separated they divided the bread equally and on the following morning about 3 o'clock Mr. Morris reached home, having traveled over 200 miles. During his absence the family had nothing to eat except potatoes, and on the morning of their father's return the children refused to get up when called for breakfast, supposing that it would consist of the same everlasting potatoes they had been eating morning, noon and

night. They did not know their father had returned with a load of flour. When informed that they had hot biscuits for breakfast they got up in a hurry. It was just daybreak when the family sat down to this luxurious meal, but they had hardly started to eat when a rap was heard at the door. It was Mr. Norton, who came over to borrow a sack of flour. He was accommodated, and Mr. Morris sat down to resume his meal when Smith and Fulton appeared on the scene, each after some flour.

E. P. Savage, now governor of the state, came to Sargent in 1879, also Charles Austin, Bion Darling, Daniel Myers, Simeon Perrin, C. Blackman and L. F. Grooms. In the spring of 1879 came William Laughlin, I. C. Tobias, James Haggerty, William Wilde, George Sherman, William Sherman, Henry Fellows, William and James Courtney, David Shaw, Dr. J. L. Goodrich, L. W. F. Cole and James and William Stennard. Miss Laura Courtney taught the first school in Sargent precinct, with about ten pupils. In August, 1878, the first Sunday school was organized by a missionary preacher of the M. E. Church by the name of Williams. Rev. Zara Norton was superintendent, and the attendance was from twelve to seventeen.

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## Pioneer Settlement of Sargent.

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B. W. Sullivan.

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The first white man to settle in what is now Sargent precinct, of whom we have any record, was Joseph A. Woods, who located in what is now known as Wood's park in the spring of 1874. The country at that time must have presented a very wild appearance. There was not a human being living within twenty miles of Mr. Woods, except possibly a family or two on the opposite side of the river near Oak Grove. The next settler to make his home in the Middle Loup valley was David S. Groff. Mr. Groff came from York county in the spring of 1876. He and three of his sons entered land adjoining. In less than four years Mr. Groff was compelled to herd his cattle in order to keep them off the growing crops of adjoining settlers. Job Semler located in the valley six miles below Sargent. Job was then a young bachelor. He freighted cedar from the Dismal and hauled goods from Grand Island, the nearest railroad town.





Dugout of Jacob Graff, in West Union Tp., showing his new house in course of erection. A well digger to the left of picture just starting to dig a well.

An incident which occurred in the family of Wilson Dye during the winter of 1880 is worth relating. Mr. Dye had gone to Woods' park, five miles distant, on some errand, probably to get supplies for his family, which consisted of his wife and three small children. While he was gone a terrible blizzard came on and he was unable to return home through the blinding



B. W. SULLIVAN.



DR. C. H. FENSTERMACHER.

snow. The pioneers not having much stock as a rule, the Dye family had but one cow and a calf to care for, and they were kept on a picket rope, no stable having yet been built for their accommodation. Mrs. Dye was very much concerned about her cow, thus exposed to the intense cold and the fury of the storm, and she was afraid that the poor animal and her calf would freeze to death before morning. Like many another pioneer woman Mrs. Dye was equal to almost any kind of an emergency. She just took the cow and her calf into the house, which consisted of a single room 16 by 24, and kept them there until the storm abated.

At this time there were six families living in what is now school district No. 6: D. S. Groff, Patrick Sullivan, Wilson Dye, John and Andy Mack and Mrs. Semler. The bachelors were Job Semler, Morris McDonald and J. D. Finley, the latter being a widower, but classed among the bachelors for convenience. Four more families came into the neighborhood that fall: M. H. Sullivan, A. E. Bruner, George Gillett and Lyman Wolcott. Mr. Sullivan moved into a little house on the northeast corner of what is now Mr. Nicolai's

farm, then owned by a Mr. Blackman, a Loup City lawyer, who held it as a timber claim. Mr. Bruner went into J. D. Finley's house, which was half dugout, half log. Mr. Gillett and Mr. Wolcott, having no place in which to move, were compelled to build small sod houses.



Mr. J. A. Woods, first settler in Woods' Park, Middle Loup River.

George Sherman was postmaster, and what little mail we got came once a week. The nearest grist mill was twenty miles away, called Rocky Ford mill, and was located near where Burwell now stands. The snow was so deep that it was almost impossible to get through it with a team. Early in January, John Mack undertook to go to mill with an ox team. He succeeded in getting about two and a half miles from home, and not being very warmly clothed, with a pair of split leather boots and no overshoes, he froze his feet so badly that he was compelled to return home. He had to wear grain sacks wrapped around his feet all winter.

When the flour was all used up coffee mills were brought into requisition to grind wheat, and bread was obtained for weeks at a time by this laborious process by many a family, who were thankful that they had the wheat to grind. It was quite a common thing to hear people speak of being snowed in. During that winter the dugouts were often entirely buried in the snow and the occupants had to dig their way out frequently.

In 1881 M. H. Sullivan raised forty bushels of corn to the acre without any cultivation. Most of the corn was planted by hand in those days, as corn planters were unknown in the community. Watermelons, muskmelons and squashes were raised in great abundance on the sod.





First Engine into Sargent, Oct. 25, 1899.

Our first school was taught by Mrs. William E. Sullivan, it being a three months' term subscription school, \$1 per month for each pupil, I believe. The school was kept in a little sod house formerly occupied by a family, dimensions about 12 by 16 feet. The text books were some old ones that had been brought from the East. The seats were home-made benches without backs. The writer imagines this was about as rude a place in which to keep school as some of the log school houses our grandfathers and grandmothers used to speak about. School district No. 36 has built two school houses since then, the present one being a good frame building costing over \$500, including furniture. The school children have kept pace with the improvements, especially in numbers, having increased from about fifteen to over fifty. The following five or six years were spent by the settlers in improving their homesteads.

The writer now wishes to give a little railroad history. In the fall of 1882 the Union Pacific completed its line from St. Paul to North Loup, in Valley county, which is about forty miles from Sargent. About the latter part of



1886 it was completed to Ord. In 1887 the B. & M. built north from Central City to Palmer, from which point one branch extended to Burwell via Ord, and the other to St. Paul, Loup City and Arcadia. The same year the latter branch was graded through Sargent almost to Brewster, forty miles above Sargent. Our people were jubilant, thinking they were going to get a railroad at once. But they were disappointed. They had to wait for twelve years before the road was completed to Sargent. During the winter and spring of 1899 petitions were sent in to the company and such a showing made of our resources that the road was finished to Sargent, the first train running into the village about October 25, 1899. It was welcomed with boundless joy by the people, many of whom had lived for twenty years waiting and longing for the great event which would place them in close connection with the rest of the world.

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## Anselmo.

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The little village of Anselmo stands on the land taken in 1884-5 by M. R. Foster, Harvey Said and Walter Scott. In the winter of 1885-6 the B. & M. railroad surveyed a line of railway from Grand Island to the Black Hills and Anselmo was platted in the fall of 1886, the railroad reaching this point a few weeks later. Henry Kelley erected the first building in the village, to be used as a drug store, before the town was platted. The next man to put up a business building was C. F. Graves, to be used as a grocery store. Dorr Heffleman was already on the ground, located in a tent, in which he conducted a bank while his building was in course of erection, afterwards known as the First Bank of Anselmo. This is probably the only bank in Nebraska that was carried on in a tent. The safe was hauled overland from Westerville, where Mr. Heffleman was doing business before he removed to Anselmo. Mr. Heffleman was also agent for the Lincoln Land Company for Anselmo. While the town was being built Harvey Said conducted a hotel in a sod building half a mile south of town, which was filled to overflowing. The first hotel in the new town was built by Thomas Flood. Weander Bros. conducted the first general store in a temporary building while Mrs. Heffleman was erecting a permanent store building for them, which was completed and occupied about December, 1886. After these came E. C. Gibbs, C. D. Pelham, H. Smith, T. R. Brayton, Dr. Stack, J. H. Brandebury and others. Dr. Hamilton came

soon with a drug store. The first newspaper, the Anselmo Sun, was moved from Dale in the fall of 1886 and printed in a tent by Isaac Meseraull. The postoffice was established in the fall of 1886, with Joe Michael as postmaster, and had a temporary mail service from Keota. Butch. Calvert, the pioneer meat man, came about the same time. The first lumber yard opened up for business with a stock that was hauled from Plum Creek on one wagon. It



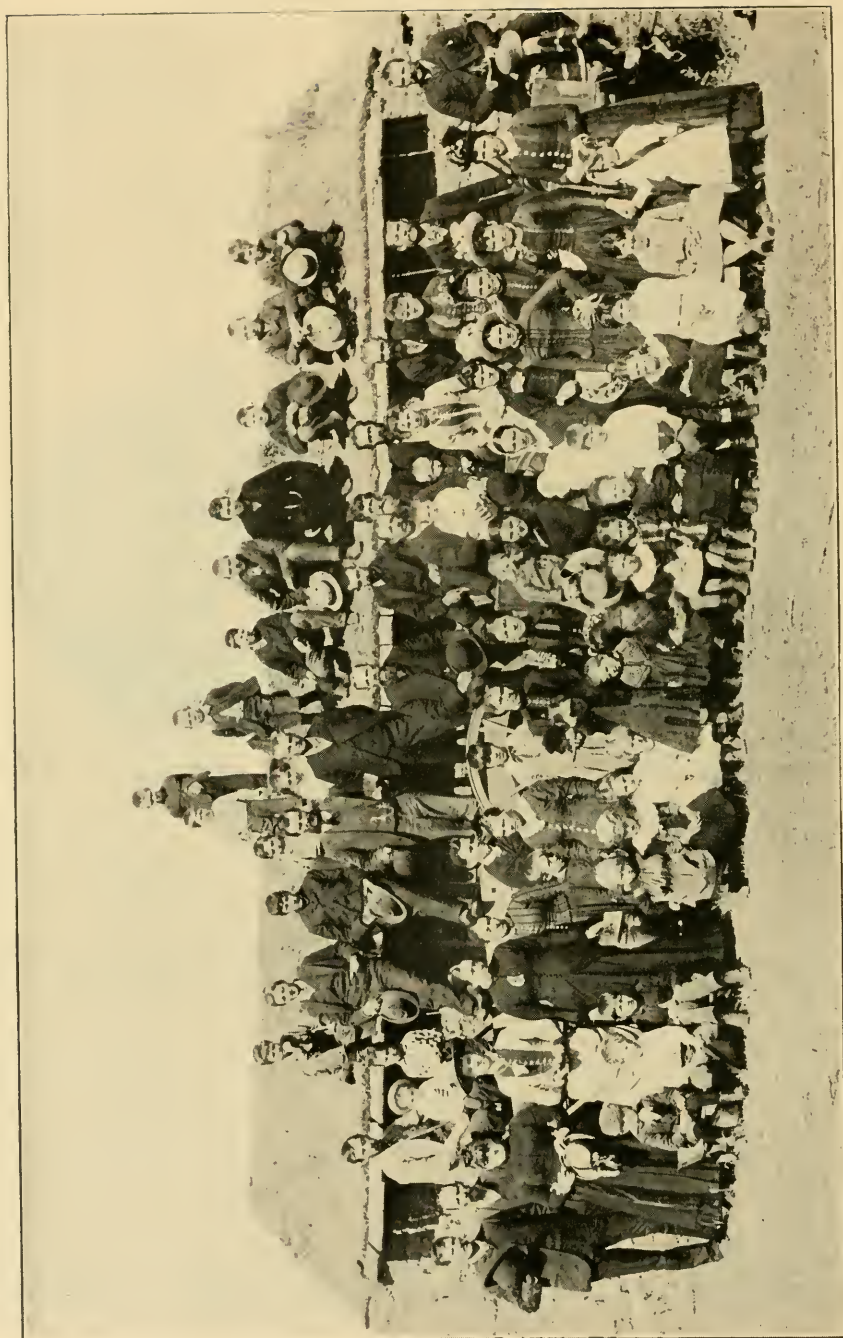
GEO. WILLIAMS.



J. W. HARBERT, Photographer.

was unloaded on a spot that was supposed to be the future townsite, but when the town was platted the lumber was not in it. Ira Foster was employed to move it to the town and a pretentious sign was set announcing the fact that the National Lumber Company was open for business. The sign, however, had used up so much of the stock that there was but little left upon which to do business. When the lumber company got around to do business (Dierks Bros.) Kloman & Arnold established their bank in the fall of 1886. The Methodist church was located on the present site in 1887. First school in the village was held in this church until the present school house was built in 1888. The first elevator was put up in the fall of 1887 by White & Glade of Crete, Nebraska, and Harvey Said was manager. The Anselmo flouring mill was brought here from Missouri by John Jessen and afterwards sold to Kloman & Arnold, who remodeled it. The plant is now owned by Isaac Clark & Co., Samuel Bowman manager.

The present business men of Anselmo are as follows: H. K. Atkins, general merchandise; Kirk Elder, livery; H. Kelley, druggist and postmaster;



A Sunday School Group at the Cooper School House near Anselmo in the 80's.

Charles Smith, hardware and harness; George Williams, general store; J. W. Harbert, photographer; W. P. Wilson, windmills and well maker; Mrs. E. C. Tupper, hotel; Moore Bros., saloon; Dr. Williams; J. W. Crist, hotel; J. B. Warren, blacksmith; Jacquot & Co., elevator; Wilson Bros., elevator; W. Warren & Co., general merchandise; T. Russell, restaurant. The B. & M. railroad have a watering station and coal sheds at this point.



A Typical Dugout.

Ira C. Ong was the first settler in Victoria township, locating four miles west of the present site of the village of Anselmo in the summer of 1879. The next settler was James Lindley, who came in the fall of 1880. Henry Heiny and Thomas B. Russell were the next to locate west of Anselmo, which they did in 1882, moving their families the year following. In the fall of 1883 came Joseph and Alvin Adkins, with their brothers, Morris, John and Calvin, and Granville Dishman, a brother-in-law, and William M. Dixon, who all took claims in the vicinity. Ira and Rolla Foster, Daniel B. Allen and Samuel Ryan came in the spring of 1884, with Walter Scott a little later the same year, and Harvey Said in 1885. Nearly all of these settlers made the home of James Lindley their headquarters until they got their own buildings ready to live in.

James Lindley came to Custer county in August, 1880, locating upon the northwest quarter of section 17, township 19, range 22, where he is still living. He arrived at New Helena, April 22nd, with 25 cents of his money left upon which to commence business in the wilderness. He was elected justice of the peace in 1881 and held the office six years. He relates a few incidents



which occurred while administering justice in these early days that may not be out of place here. Upon one occasion two Irishmen had some difficulty about the boundary line between their claims and the result was a collision. The one who came out second best in the row came to Mr. Lindley to get justice, his face covered with blood and his nose in a very demoralized condition. The justice issued a warrant for the arrest of his antagonist, handed it to him and directed him to the home of the constable. In due time the constable appeared at the home of the justice with both of the men. After reading the complaint the defendant pleaded not guilty, and a trial was had without counsel or witnesses, each man pleading his own case. The plaintiff alleged that defendant had come to his place and commenced the row. The defendant promptly denied that he had commenced the row, but admitted that he had gone to the plaintiff's house, and said that the plaintiff had attacked him with a pitchfork. The plaintiff then turned toward the defendant, laid his index finger on his nose and asked:

"How was that done?"

"Ye did it yerself whin I was takin' the pitchfork away from ye," replied the defendant.

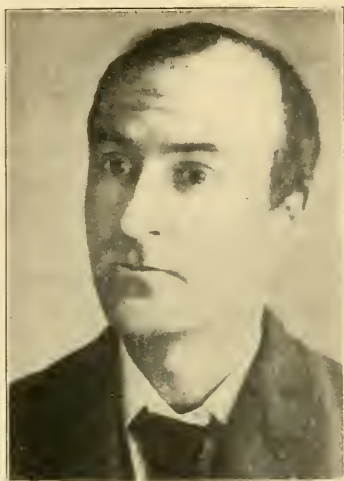
The plaintiff then offered his nose in evidence by turning to the court and saying: "The court knows very well that nose was chewed."

And sure enough it had that appearance, and well chewed at that. The plaintiff was fined \$1 and costs and the two departed together apparently satisfied with the result of the suit. Upon another occasion Mr. Lindley had occasion to go to the sod house of three bachelors, when one of them in a joking mood asked him how much he would charge him to perform the marriage ceremony. Not being rushed with business of that sort, Mr. Lindley replied that he would do it for half price. The second bachelor then spoke up and wanted to know how much the justice would charge to marry him. The accommodating justice said he would marry him free. Then the third bachelor was anxious to know what the charge for marrying him would be. "O, I'll marry you for nothing, and board you and your wife free for a week," laughingly replied Mr. Lindley. The first two never called upon Mr. Lindley to assist them into wedlock, but not very long afterwards number three appeared with a fair maiden and insisted that the justice fulfill his agreement, which Mr. Lindley did, and the groom being of a generous disposition, boarded with the justice two weeks instead of one. From the small capital with which Mr. Lindley commenced business in Custer county he has accumulated an independence. He is the owner of 1,580 acres of land, 600 under cultivation, twenty acres of trees and all free from incumbrance.

## Killing of Arnold and Capture of Bohannan.

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One day shortly before 8 o'clock a. m. four strange horsemen rode into the village of Sargent. Meeting Bob McGregor, they represented that they were from Brown county in search of two boys who had accidentally set the prairie on fire, doing a lot of damage, and who, in order to escape the wrath of their father, had supposedly taken his team and made their escape to parts



BOHANNAN.

unknown. He informed them that he had seen nothing of the boys, but that two men on horseback had passed through town about two hours before. This information appeared to satisfy the men, and without further delay they followed in the wake of the horsemen referred to by McGregor. They found the two men had passed the night at Bi Darling's old house about a mile west of the village, who evidently did not know they were being so closely followed, as, after crossing the Middle Loup river they stopped at Whipple's ranch and played a game of croquet. They then took their direction and leisurely rode away, little dreaming that four pursuers were hot on their trail and lessening the distance between them every minute. They struck Clear creek at Lone Tree and rode up to Elias Mottinger's house. No one being

at home, they go in, western fashion, and help themselves to such eatables as they can find. The wind is blowing a gale from the south, and as they emerge from Mottinger's house to proceed on their way they do not observe four horsemen approaching them from a distance. The four horsemen, however, have sighted their game, and galloping their horses down a hill into a canon to be out of view, are closing in on the fugitives as fast as possible. One of the thieves does not appear to be armed, and the other has his gun strapped to his saddle. They had barely mounted to resume their journey when two of their pursuers dashed up, one in front, and the other in the rear. Harris, the man in front, shouts: "Throw up your hands!" Arnold, the man with the Winchester, throws up one of his hands with a revolver in it, and his revolver and another in the hand of Harris both speak at the same instant; but Harris gets in his second shot too quick for Arnold, whose weapon drops from his nerveless hand to the ground. By this time the horse had carried Arnold quite a distance from where the shooting commenced, and in a few moments he is alongside his companion, who immediately bends down and begins to unstrap Arnold's Winchester as they both gallop along side by side, closely followed by the now thoroughly alarmed vigilantes. Davis is the nearer to the two men, but his revolver is empty. He sees that the Winchester will soon be leveled at him, and dashing up beside the man, he thrusts his empty revolver in his face and thunders out: "Put up your hands or I'll blow the top of your head off!" The fellow not knowing Davis' weapon is harmless, obeys. Arnold falls from his horse and the other is bound. The other two vigilantes soon arrive on the scene and it is discovered that Harris has been shot through the top of his shoulder, while another bullet grazed his temple. It appeared later that Harris had shot Arnold twice through the body, and that any one of his three shots would have proven fatal.

The vigilantes returned to Sargent with their prisoner, leaving Arnold where he fell, weltering in his blood, where he was found by Milton Parkhurst and James Chambers at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, dead. They also found his revolver where it had dropped from his hand, two of its chambers empty. Mr. Parkhurst, a justice of the peace, sent a man to Broken Bow to notify Sheriff Penn. In the meantime the vigilantes had reached Sargent with their prisoner, who was identified by McGregor as one of the men who had ridden through town that morning. He inquired what they had done with the other man.

"O, we left him on the prairie over by Broken Bow."

They were about to go on their way with the prisoner, when William Sherman, Joe Thomas, J. H. Brandebury, George Walker, deputy sheriff, and

others demanded an explanation, as they claimed to be hunting boys in the morning. The vigilantes replied that they supposed they were pursuing two boys, and that they did not know that Arnold had broken out of the jail at Valentine until they discovered him to be one of the fugitives. The Sargent committee informed the two men that it appeared to be a serious matter, and that they would not be allowed to leave town until an inquest had been held upon the body of Arnold. Harris replied with an oath that the citizens had no authority to hold them, and that they would burn powder before they would stay.

"You fellows may do business that way up in Brown county," said Joe Thomas, "but we are partially civilized in Custer county, and have a different way of doing things. You will have to stand a trial, and if you are all right you will be none the worse for staying with us for a while."

J. H. Brandebury, coroner, George Walker and Davis went after Arnold's body, while Harris submitted to have his wounds attended to by Dr. Waynick. The other two vigilantes were permitted to go, as even the prisoner said they had no hand in the shooting. The coroner arrived with the body about 2 o'clock the next morning, and an inquest was held which resulted in a verdict of shooting in self-defense. The two men were taken to Broken Bow, however, with the prisoner, by Sheriff Penn, who soon discovered that the prisoner was an outlaw by the name of Bohannan, who was wanted by two sheriffs, who came near killing each other shortly afterwards in a quarrel as to which was to have him. Penn turned the prisoner over to his captors, who took him back to Brown county, receiving a reward of \$100. He was convicted of cattle stealing and sent to the penitentiary for twelve years.

Coroner Brandebury telegraphed to the chief of police of Lincoln to see Arnold's mother and sister and ascertain whether they desired to have the body shipped to Lincoln or buried in Custer county. The old lady replied: "Well, I s'pose he might jest as well be buried up thar and save expenses," while the devoted sister remarked: "I told Joe he'd git shot if he didn't quit his cattle rustlin'." And so Joe Arnold, the cattle thief, was laid away beneath the buffalo sod of Custer county, and there were no mourners at his funeral.





## Terrible Fall in a Deep Well.

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The depth to water on the table lands of Custer county entailed many hardships on the early settlers. None of them had the means to sink modern wells to such a depth, and had consequently to resort to the laborious method of hauling water in barrels from the lower lands, often having to go as far as six miles for it. Some of the settlers on the tables dug wells from 200 to 300 feet in depth and hauled water out of them by horse power. The existence of these fearful holes in the ground, mostly without curbing, resulted in many accidents, some of which will be found described in other parts of this work. In the fall of 1895 F. W. Carlin fell into a well 143 feet deep, and he thus describes the manner in which he climbed out in the Custer County Beacon of September 5th of that year:

While driving through the country about fifteen miles northwest of Broken Bow on the evening of August 14th, it became quite dark and I found I had taken the wrong track and driven up to some old sod building. I turned around and started down what looked to me like a good road into the draw, when one of my horses seemed to step down into a place. I got out of the wagon and started along side of the team to be sure that the road was all right, when without a moment's notice I became aware of the fact that I had stepped into an old well and was going down like a shot out of a gun.

I placed my feet close together, stretched my arms straight over my head and said, "Oh God, have mercy on me!" and I honestly believe that saved my life, but I went down, down, and it seemed to me I would never reach the bottom. The further I went, the faster I went and never seemed to touch the sides at all.

I supposed of course, it would kill me when I struck the bottom, but God had heard my prayer. I struck in the mud and water which completely covered me over. I was considerably stunned, but was able to straighten up and get my head above the water. I scrambled around and finally extracted my legs from the mud, and finally stood on my feet in the water which came just up to my arms. It was very cold, and I tried a number of times to get out of the water only to fall back. The curbing was somewhat slimy. I finally managed to break off a small piece from the curbing and found a crack in which I managed to fasten it into and perched myself upon it until morning. While sitting there I heard my team running away. In them was my only

hopes of rescue. For I was aware of the fact that I was at least a mile and a half from the nearest house, and that no one knew that I was there.

There I sat till morning. It was about nine o'clock when I fell in, and I was drenched with water and plastered with mud.

The only serious injury I received was a badly sprained ankle, which gave me great pain. I also had a sore place on my back, which I found a number of days afterwards to be a broken rib. As soon as daylight appeared, I began to look around and take in the situation. In looking up it seemed to me at least 100 feet to the top. But I learned afterwards that it was exactly 143 feet deep.

It was curbed in places with curbing about three feet square. There would be a place curbed for about from six to sixteen feet and then there would be a place that was not curbed at all. The curbing was perfectly tight, not a crack between them that I could get my fingers into, and covered with a slimy mud. I at once concluded that my only chance for rescue was my knife, if it had not fallen out of my pocket while floundering in the mud, so thrusting my hand into my pocket, there it was, and a good one too. I took it and began cutting foot holes in the sides of the curbing; it was very slow but sure. I never went back a foot after I had gained it. When I would get to the top of a curbing, I took the boards that I had cut out and made me a seat in one corner, and in this way I think I got up about fifty feet the first day. Sometime in the afternoon I came to a curbing which I thought I could not get through; it was of solid 1 by 6 boards closely fitted together and not less than sixteen feet to the top of it. So I made myself a good seat, fixing myself as comfortable as possible. I concluded that I must stay here and await assistance, or die there.

I stayed there all the next night and slept one-half of the time, for the night did not seem very long. I would have been quite comfortable had I not been so wet and cold, and my feet pained me terribly, which was the greatest drawback. I had to do most of my climbing on one foot.

I remained at that point the greater part of the next forenoon, calling often for help. One thing was in my favor; I was neither hungry nor thirsty. I began to give up all hopes. I thought of my wife and little boy, who were always so glad to see me when I came home from a trip. I thought how the little fellow would never see his papa or run to meet him when he returned home again. That was too great. I made up my mind that I would get out or die in the attempt. So I took a piece of board and put some sand on it and got the point of my knife good and sharp and began cutting away the curbing and making one foot hole after another. I cut, climbing higher and higher

and was at last on top of the curbing. From there I would have been comfortable if my feet had not hurt me so badly. But I cut holes in the clay for my hands and feet with my knife and finally I got within about sixteen feet of the top. Right there I had the worst hindrance I had met yet. It was a round curbing four feet high and perfectly smooth on the inside. It was washed out around it until it was only held from dropping by a little peg on one side. I knew if I tried to go up through it, it was pretty sure to break loose and go to the bottom with me. So my only chance was to go up between the curb and the wall. This I was fortunate in doing. By going to work and digging away the wall, in half an hour I had a hole large enough to let me pass through. After that it was but a short job to reach the top, which I did, and lay for some time exhausted.

I then knelt down and thanked Almighty God for sparing my life, as I had prayed for him to do, time and again during the past two days and nights that I had been in the well.

But my trouble was not at an end yet. I was one and a half miles from a house with a foot I could not step on. I cut some large weeds and made out to hobble and crawl to the road, about forty rods distant, and there I lay until nearly sundown looking for a team which never came. After getting out in the sun, I became very thirsty. At last I gave up looking for any one and started to crawl on my hands and knees to find a house, but I soon gave out and had to lie out another night. In the morning I felt somewhat better. Starting out again I finally arrived at the home of Charles Francis just at daylight, where I was given food and drink, after being without for two days and three nights.

My team was found the next day after I fell in the well by a man by the name of Green with the doubletrees and neck yoke attached to them. To Mr. Green great credit is due. He took them to a justice of the peace, filed an estray notice and turned them into the pasture. Thus complying with the law and taking away the last chance for being discovered.

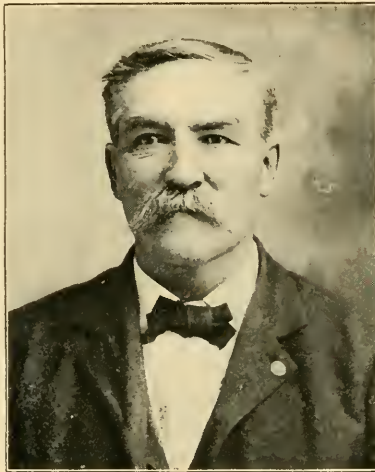
Let this be a warning to all who may read it to fill up all the old wells in their neighborhood, for we know not who the next may be. Also remember to trust in God, for he can save when no one else can. No one could have taken the fall that I did and get out alive, without the aid of a Higher Power than theirs.



## Redfern Table.

James Whitehead.

In being called upon to furnish some facts relative to the early settlement of Custer county I shall confine myself principally to the locality in which I first made settlement. This will take me back to a period beginning seventeen years ago. Up to 1880 cattle men had undisputed possession of thous-



JAMES WHITEHEAD.

ands of acres of land that in the three years following its occupancy yielded an average of twenty bushels of wheat per acre. But the settler came, and he came to stay. Many were veterans of the Civil War, were in the prime of vigorous manhood, and held life as cheap and could shoot as straight as the dare-devil cowboy, and not unfrequently "got the drop" on those who had heretofore boasted of having things pretty much their own way. Thus, in part, the problem of settlement had become adjusted and the way made easy for those who in 1883-84 were pioneers in the settlement of the southwestern part of Custer county.



The way of approach, in those days, was from Kearney along the Wood river valley to its confluence with the South Loup at a point near the present site of Callaway. Further west were Plum Creek and Cozad, points on the line of the Union Pacific; the former about thirty miles from the south line of Custer; the latter fifteen miles nearer. At this point there was a gently undulating tract of country then known far and near as "Buffalo Table," located in township thirteen and fourteen, ranges twenty-two and twenty-three, being within the twenty mile limit, every odd numbered section of this entire table land was included in the grant of the Union Pacific. Inviting as it was with its deep, rich soil, none of its lands were appropriated until the latter part of 1883. The first entry made in this locality was by no less a personage than Patrick Egan of Lincoln. It was on section thirty-four, township fourteen, range twenty-three. No breaking being done the first year, by contest it passed into the hands of Ernest Schneider. The first homestead entries made were by Harvey Stockham and Otto Jaster, November 14, 1883, and by Charles B. Drum, December 13th, which comprised all entries made during that year. February 11, 1884, James Whitehead made homestead entry for lands adjoining Charles Drum, and with the opening spring, Ernest Schneider, John Helmuth, Charles W. Redfern and his son Frank, with Henry, Chris. and John Miller, appeared upon the scene, selected and settled upon their lands and immediately begun improvements.

It was the purpose of the writer to secure by purchase a half section of railroad land adjoining, or as near as possible to his homestead; this he supposed he had done, but on reaching his home in Wisconsin was apprised by Hon. J. H. MacColl of Plum Creek, agent for the railroad company, that the lands selected by him had passed into other hands. This necessitated his immediate return to Nebraska. Accompanied by J. A. Mahaffy and George Healy we reached Plum Creek about the 10th of March. The morning following our arrival we started for the table lands accompanied by Mr. Huey, surveyor of Dawson county. It was after night when we reached the divide. The weather, which had been warm, had turned cold and snow began to fall. It had been our intention to pass the night upon the prairie and we had come prepared, bringing robes, blankets and a supply of provisions to last us several days. The increasing cold and falling snow which Mr. Huey, who was an "old timer," assured us might develop into a regular blizzard, made the outlook anything but encouraging. After traveling some distance in the darkness we saw a glimmering light and heard the barking of a dog; this led us to the claim of Ernest Schneider. Though he had arrived but a day or two before, he had a frame dwelling partly erected, which with his own and other fami

lies, and belated travelers like ourselves, seemed full to overflowing; notwithstanding this we received a hearty welcome. The building was but partly roofed and through the night the snow descended upon those who stretched themselves upon the floor and sought rest and forgetfulness of discomforts in sleep. Beneath a pile of blankets in one corner of the room that was better protected from the storm, lay the sick wife of our host. She never recovered, but died shortly after and was buried near by; the first death and burial that marked the early settlement of that vicinity. In addition to those I have named, William Greenfield, Joe Malson, Ezra Wright, R. E. Williams, J. W. Bissell, John Matz, William Gibson, Chris. Helmuth, the Wysharts, were pioneer settlers of the table or its environments, followed in time by John McGuigan and the Armours, also Joe Gilmore, A. P. Cox, Oliver Whitehead, Willis Hines, the Langes, David and William Bain, John Runcie and John Berwick. The all-absorbing question that presented itself to every settler was water, and how it might be obtained. Away to the east in Wood river valley, Van Antwerp and Thurman had wells, but they were from six to ten miles distant; there were none nearer and the combined means of all was not sufficient to put one down. To meet this exigency cisterns were dug on the edge of draws or bordering lagoons, the supply depending upon the rainfall and their ability to secure and conserve it. All that was met, endured and overcome, the difficulties and obstacles to success in the way of those early settlers, will never be known or written. Water there was in abundance; the best, purest and most wholesome that could slake the thirst and gladden the heart of man or beast, but it was from four to five hundred feet below the surface and the means of securing it an unsolved problem.

Among those who had come into this locality were two men, Mr. Edward Crewdson, a wealthy Englishman who had purchased three sections of railroad land and was engaged in stock raising, and Mr. Gregory J. Campau of Detroit, who had purchased a large tract of land and was also a man of considerable means. These men put down hydraulic wells and secured a never failing and abundant supply of water to which the settler had free access. The last named even put down a large cistern into which a stream of water was pumped continuously for the use and accommodation of those who had no other means of securing the life-giving beverage. On several occasions Mr. Crewdson deprived his cattle of the water they craved in order that the wants of his neighbors might first be satisfied. These men have passed away; but monuments have been raised to perpetuate the deeds and memory of many whose claims to remembrance were not so well founded. But their names are

cherished and their unselfish generosity remembered by those whose gratitude could alone compensate for their kindness.

We ascertained that we were included in school district number three, which extended to the Dawson county line, six miles to the south, and to a point several miles north of the present site of Callaway, while the school house was some fifteen miles distant, in what was known as "Sand Valley." During the fall of 1885 we took steps to organize a new district. In this enterprise Mr. Redfern rendered most efficient aid. As indicating the character and intelligence of the people, also the progress made in the organization of school districts at that early day, our district was designated as No. 113. The school house was built of sod, was comfortable and commodious; the people contributed the work and Mr. Crewdson generously furnished the lumber and all material that entered into its construction, which he delivered free upon the ground. The first officers elected were C. W. Redfern, director, Chris. Miller, moderator, and James Whitehead, treasurer. Miss Louisa Cornish (now Mrs. Johnson of Lodi) was the first teacher and proved a most capable and efficient instructor. Although most of us had held membership in different churches in our former homes, no minister of any denomination had come among us, and no preaching services had been held in that vicinity. With the erection of a schoolhouse we were anxious to make amends for this apparent neglect and begin life aright in our new home. Mr. Crewdson, who was an Episcopalian, assured us he had a man in mind that could be secured, and soon thereafter services were announced with Rev. L. G. Brooker, "The Cow Boy Preacher," officiating; owing to reports that had reached us relative to the man's past, great interest was attached to this first sermon. The Rev. Brooker, or "Brooker," as he was commonly called, was a character as unique, and possessed a personality as striking as in their day did Lorenzo Dow or Peter Cartwright. He owned and lived upon a farm in Platte valley, twenty-two miles to the south, had been converted some four years before and became so strongly imbued with the conviction that he was "divinely called" to preach that he could find neither rest nor peace until he had consecrated himself to the ministry. Ordained by the Evangelical Association, he had been engaged in the work about three years when in the fall of 1885 he preached his first sermon on Buffalo Table. It was the first religious service or meeting some who were there had attended in two years. His efforts were well received and in due time he made fortnightly appointments which in connection with other points he continued to fill for three years. As an evangelist and organizer this unlettered Bonarges had but few equals, and measured by results he attained a success denied to many whose entire life had been devoted

to the study of rhetoric and theology. He was a man of fine physique; about thirty-five years of age and though slender in build possessed of wonderful endurance and great physical strength. By a brother minister he was pronounced "a compound bundle of energy." We have known him in the early winter to drive from his home to fill a forenoon appointment at Redfern schoolhouse, and without stopping to eat or feed his team push on to Sand Valley, fifteen miles, for afternoon, and from thence across the Loup seven miles further to Triumph schoolhouse for evening service, having in many instances eaten nothing from early morning until his day's work was ended. His field of labor was known and designated by the conference as "Custer Mission." When he entered upon this field his church had not a single member, but as evidencing his zeal and earnestness, in eighteen months he had received into membership one hundred and fifty persons and built and dedicated free from debt, two frame churches. During that time and apart from his personal contributions he received the munificent sum of fifteen dollars for his labors. He remained and had charge of this mission for nearly four years; has since presided over churches in Kearney and Grand Island, his ministrations being invariably attended by his old-time success. I have devoted this space to him for the reason that he entered so largely into the life and experiences of those times; believing also that in the settlement of this portion of the county the "cowboy preacher" had a work to do, which all things considered he performed faithfully and well. As largely due to his efforts in organizing and laying the foundation and the high character of his ministerial successors, who were respectively Reverends Dillow, Maze, Kirkpatrick, Gill, Devol and Wolford, the following named persons have entered the ministry and been assigned to duty in other fields, viz: David Bain, James Runcie, Frank Drum and John Clark. I have heretofore referred to this locality as "Buffalo Table," the name by which it is known to the hunters and pioneers of other localities. With the establishment of a postoffice in the fall of 1884, known and designated upon the maps as Redfern, it thenceforth became known by that name. The first postmaster was C. W. Redfern, followed by Charles Drum and William Gibson. Immediately following their settlement Redfern and Drum formed a partnership and engaged in the well business. Being men of resource and mechanical skill they were successful from the start. The hauling of water in barrels which occupied so much of the early settlers' time was thus virtually brought to an end. In 1890 Schneider, Helmut, Redfern, Miller and Williams secured wells, varying in depth from 404 to 460 feet.

No event that occurred in those early days was so impressive and touch-



ingly pathetic as the circumstances that surrounded the death and burial of Mrs. Campau. Born and raised in the city of Detroit, she was twenty years her husband's junior. She had enjoyed social and educational advantages unknown to those she met and whose acquaintance she formed in her frontier home; this, however, was never manifested towards the humblest of her neighbors, to whom by her kindly acts and friendly ways she became endeared. Taken suddenly ill, her sickness was known to few until her death was announced. On the day fixed for the funeral it seemed as if the entire community had assembled for miles around. Their dwelling, then the best farmhouse in the county, was on the southern slope of the table land and looked forth upon a beautiful valley along which lay the road that led to Lexington. On that sloping hillside, but a few feet from the porch, they had prepared her grave, and when her cofined remains had been lowered, from among the gathered mourners the husband and father advanced, and with raised hand as if to command attention, paid in deep, tender tones a most touching tribute to the worth and excellence of the departed. "I have known the one," he remarked, "whose open grave we stand beside, from childhood. She was not in any sense a society woman, but one whose heart was in her home, whose solicitude was for her family," concluding in tremulous tones, "but her work on earth is accomplished, her mission is fulfilled; I wish that I were lying beside her." And there he now does rest, the summons coming some two or three years later. Of the entire family numbering nine souls, but two remain; the balance are dead and scattered. Frank and Gabriel occupy the old home, faithful guardians of their parents' remains; determined that their resting place shall not pass into strangers' hands. In those grass-covered mounds, by daily contact, they have a constant and ever present reminder of the changes and mutations time, merciless and unrelenting, has brought to them.

The sod schoolhouse having served its day and purpose has been supplanted by a frame structure of increased dimensions. Meeting with friends and former neighbors on the occasion of "Children's Day" last summer, we witnessed the assembling of one hundred and sixty people who participated in and by their presence encouraged exercises that marked an era of growth and prosperity that spoke volumes for the character and intelligence of the community. The children of those days have grown to manhood and womanhood; some of them still linger at the old home, while others have married and in homes of their own are seeking to extract from life all of joy and happiness it may contain. The pioneers themselves are growing old, but in all that marks the march of civilization, to which they contributed and their hands have helped to build, they have erected monuments that will endure, and by which their memory will be perpetuated when the marble that marks their resting place shall have crumbled to decay.

## Early Settlers West of Broken Bow.

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The first settlers between the towns of Broken Bow, Merna and Callaway, were J. D. Ream, who settled about five miles northwest of Broken Bow, and C. H. Jeffords, who settled about five miles west of that city, in the spring of 1880. To show the innocence and inexperience of these two bachelors, who came into this country in a farm wagon which contained all of their pos-



E. JEFFORDS.



MRS. E. JEFFORDS.

sessions, and which was drawn by a yoke of oxen, we will tell a little story at their expense. As they began to leave the settlements on their journey west into the wilderness, they thought it would be a fine thing to have fresh eggs during the summer, in their new home, and in order to be able to enjoy this luxury they struck a bargain with a thrifty housewife for a dozen fine young chickens, the flock being shortly afterwards increased by the addition of six hens which they got at an astonishing bargain from another housewife along the way. When they arrived near the present site of the city of Broken Bow they camped with Wilson Hewitt, and as that kind and accommodating pioneer invited the wayfarers to make their headquarters there until they got their claims located, they turned their chickens loose, inviting Mrs.

Hewitt out to inspect the flock. Mrs. Hewitt looked them over with the eye of an experienced housewife and then fell into such a fit of laughter that the boys thought she had gone crazy. When she recovered her composure she informed the young poultry fanciers that their flock consisted of eleven young roosters, one pullet and six old hens that had probably come over in Noah's ark and that had long since passed the period of their usefulness as layers of eggs. The boys were of course very much crestfallen as their visions of fresh eggs were thus suddenly dashed to the ground, and also very indignant at the unfair advantage that had been taken of their ignorance by the women who had sold them the chickens. They promptly made Mrs. Hewitt a present of the whole flock and did not again attempt to embark in the poultry business until after they were married.

The next settler to locate in the vicinity was H. C. Reyner with his wife and one child. He also imported two mules and one cow, and from the latter Mrs. Reyner supplied the whole settlement with butter during the following summer, churning it in a half-gallon crock. The baby, Paul, now a fine young man, served as a soldier in the First Nebraska regiment in the Philippine islands. These settlers celebrated the Fourth of July, 1880, in a canon south of the tableland which lies east of Merna, together with a number of others from the vicinity of Broken Bow, among whom were Wilson Hewitt, C. D. Pelham, Moses Lewis and others, with their families.

Mr. Jeffords located just east of what is known in Broken Bow as the West Table, in a section of country known at that time as South Muddy Flat. Among the next settlers in this vicinity were R. M. Longfellow and Sebastian Neth, the latter widely known for his energy and business capacity, having served the people ably several times as a member of the county board of supervisors. The neighborhood was also favored in the acquisition of a couple of school teachers from Ohio, named Mary E. and Agnes A. Price, but they soon ended their career as school teachers and formed partnerships with two bachelors, Jeffords and Brown, and the result of these partnerships is a number of young bug eaters who will probably figure in Custer county history long after their parents are forgotten.



## Callaway Protestant Episcopal Church.

H. H. Andrews.

While an occasional service was held in Callaway by the missionary resident of Broken Bow, under the direction of the Right Reverend George Worthington, Bishop of Nebraska, it was not until the consecration of Right Reverend Anson R. Graves, January 1, 1890, and the setting aside of the jurisdiction of the Platte, that any regular services were held in Callaway. Bishop Graves visited Callaway May 16, 1890, and arranged for regular services by Rev. W. S. Sayers, rector at Broken Bow. Under his active encouragement and help Holy Trinity Church was erected and the mission built up. The church building cost \$1,500, and was erected in 1890. To the ceaseless energy of Mrs. Georgia Ingram, more than to any other one person, is due the credit for the erection of the largest church building in Callaway. Its corner stone was laid with due Masonic ceremonies, November 25, 1890, this being the first instance in which this symbolic service was held in Custer county. The officers present were: M. W. Robert E. French, grand master; R. W. Lee, P. Gillett, Grand Custodian, assisted by forty master Masons, local and visitors. Broken Bow sent twenty-six Masons. In the furnishing of the church many beautiful and useful articles were received from various liberal churchmen, among which were: Silver communion service, by the sons of O. M. Carter, Omaha; Holy Bible, Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York; bell, John Taylor & Co., Loughborough, England; altar linen, altar hangings and dossal curtain, beautiful white set, Mrs. Georgia Ingram, San Diego, California; purple set, Mrs. Graves, wife of the bishop; green set, Ladies' Guild; alms basin, Rev. R. G. Osborn of Platte Collegiate Institute; corner stone, cross, Mr. Osborn of Kearney granite works; candlesticks, gilt and silver, Arthur Bird; vases, V. G. Gurinian.

The year 1893 brought a financial panic and a failure of crops. A tornado June 4, 1894, threw the church off its foundation and injured everything in the building. This year of misfortunes the church was moved to a new location, repaired, furnace put in and rectory built, necessitating an expenditure of \$950 in cash. By some strange coincidence the greatest material advance to Holy Trinity Church seems to come in the times of greatest financial depression. The church was consecrated free of debt, January 1, 1895, and



organized as a mission under the rules of the bishop of the Platte, July 7, 1895. The jurisdiction of the Platte was abolished and the jurisdiction of Laramie took its place in 1898. Services were held at first once a month, sometimes once in two months, but the church had so prospered that since 1900 regular morning and evening services have been held every Sunday. The rector does missionary work along the Kearney & Black Hills railroad and around Callaway. The following rectors have had charge of this mission under Right Rev. Anson R. Graves, S. T. D., bishop of Laramie: Rev. W. S. Sayres, Rev. S. A. Potter, Rev. H. E. Robbins, Rev. Austin F. Morgan, Rev. E. P. Chittenden, Ph. D.; Rev. John Powers, Rev. A. E. Osborn, Rev. R. A. Russell, Rev. Charles Ferguson, Rev. R. M. Herdman, Rev. J. M. Bates. Number of communicants, May 1, 1901, fifty. The present official members of the church are: Senior warden, H. H. Andrews; junior warden, George O. Benger; clerk, Mrs. Clara Benger; organist, Miss Emily Holloway; lay reader, H. H. Andrews. To the chief shepherd of the flock, Bishop Graves, is due chief praise for his good work in this mission, giving it the best of his clergy and ever raising funds to improve its property.

The Ladies' Guild of the P. E. Church was organized by the Right Rev. Anson R. Graves at the time of his first visit to Callaway, May 16, 1890. This organization was completed May 27, 1890, by the adoption of the by-laws and the election of the following officers: President, Mrs. Lydia F. Bird; vice president, Mrs. Catherine E. Nixon; secretary, Mrs. Georgia A. Ingram; treasurer, Mr. George S. Smith. The following members were first enrolled: Mrs. Lydia F. Bird, Mrs. Anna Tyson, Mrs. Catherine E. Nixon, Mrs. Etta Bergman, Mrs. Georgia A. Ingram, Mrs. Fannie Sherwood, Mrs. Martha Pike, Miss Lucy J. Johnston. From this nucleus sprang, not a large, but a very active guild, which has been the mainstay of Holy Trinity Church. The history of the guild is the history of the church. The guild really was the prime mover in building and furnishing the church. It purchased the historical organ, the organ that for years was the only one in the town, and which was used on every occasion, and which finally, through the liberality of the guild, found a resting place within the church, and now dispenses sacred music as sweetly as it did secular harmonies in its youth. The guild furnished the seats of the church, the communion rail and the altar. It paid for half of the English bell and paid freight and custom duties on it. The bell was a half gift from John Taylor & Co., Loughborough, England. So not only is the church in communion with the Church of England, but the congregation assembles every Sunday at the ring and call of its English bell. The guild has supported in part the rector's salary, paid incidental expenses, sexton and organist, and

made up deficiencies in general. During the drought of 1890 it disbursed needful articles to the indigent and worthy poor, and the same was true of the great drought of 1894. It is the active, working organization of the church, rich in good deeds and worthy of the highest praise. The present officers are: President, Mrs. Hattie Andrews; secretary, Mrs. Clara Bengler, vice president, Mrs. Josephine Phillips; treasurer, Mr. H. H. Andrews. The membership is about twenty.

Holy Trinity Sunday school includes forty teachers and scholars. Membership remains about stationary. Superintendent since organization, H. H. Andrews. Teachers: Oliver Phillips, Mabel Decker, Emma Conly, Emily Holloway, Emily Brega.

The Sunday school library was donated by parties in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and Brooklyn, New York. About half came from Miss Nellie Allan, Cincinnati, a former teacher in the Sunday school.

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## Mason City.

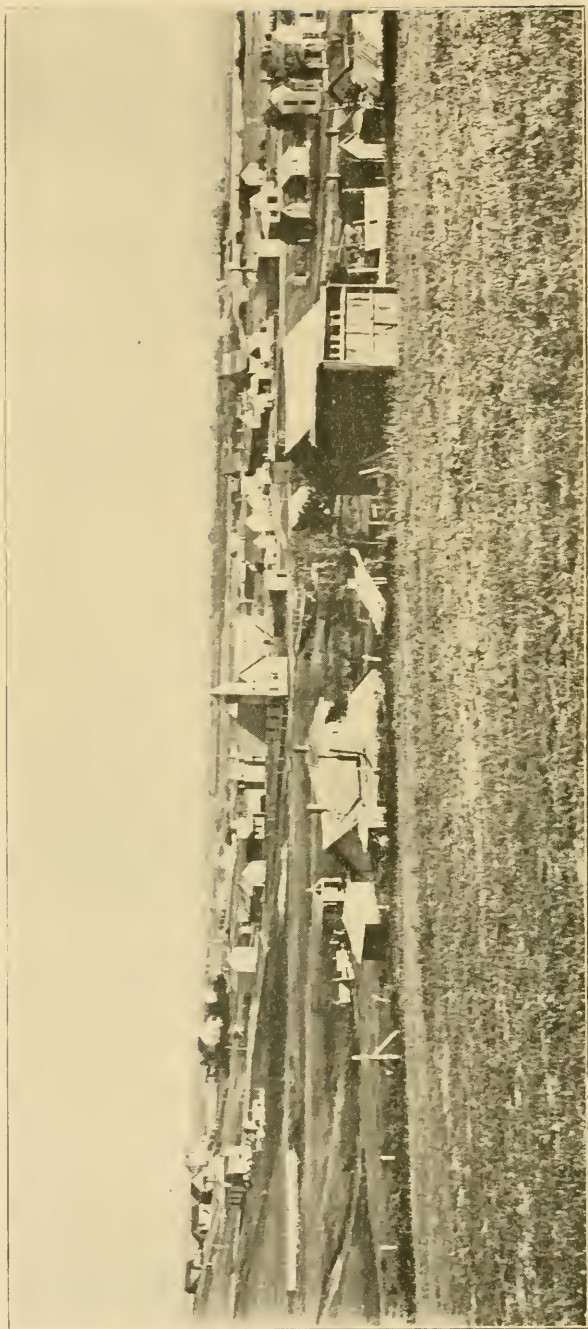
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M. C. Warrington.

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In the space to which the writer is limited, it is a difficult task to give a complete description of the country surrounding Mason City. Neither can we give a full detail of pioneer settlement and early historical incidents. We deal with these matters only in a general way.

Mason City, the "Queen City" of the Muddy valley, is located on the Grand Island & Wyoming branch of the B. & M. railroad, fifty-seven miles northwest of Grand Island, twenty-three miles southeast of Broken Bow, and forty-five miles north of Kearney. The location of Mason City, situated as it is almost the central part of the southeastern quarter of Custer county, is worthy of the attention of all who desire to locate in a town for which not only nature, but circumstances, have provided for so abundantly, and one which will undoubtedly make a busy, bustling town of importance. The townsite was located by the Lincoln Land Company in April, 1886. The land on which the town now stands was purchased of Nels Anderson and Mrs. George W. Runyan, 160 acres being secured from each of these parties. About one-half of this 320 acres has been platted into lots, the other half being held by the com-



Mason City, Custer County, Neb.

pany for the same purpose in case the growth of the town demands it. The slope from the hills to the valley is gradual, just sufficient for good drainage. Nearly all the different branches of business, trades and professions are represented here by a live and energetic set of people. The following is a full list of the different branches of business, and those who represent them: The Mason City Banking Company, with P. H. Marley president, J. J. Marley vice



M. C. WARRINGTON.



O. H. MOOMEY AND FAMILY.

president, and R. B. Walker cashier. In addition to the banking business, Mr. Marley is extensively engaged in the real estate business. The Mason City Transcript is the only newspaper published in Mason City. The paper was established by Martin & Dellinger in June, 1886. M. C. Warrington, the present proprietor and editor, has had active control of the paper since August, 1886, making him the oldest editor in point of service and continuous connection with one paper in Custer county. For some years past the editor has been ably assisted in the publication of the paper by William A. Anderson. The mercantile business of Mason City is represented by E. G. Burrows, general merchandise; W. C. Elliott, general merchandise; T. J. Wood, general merchandise; O. H. Moomey, general merchandise, S. M. Chase, general merchandise; A. O'Brien, hardware and groceries; G. P. Meek, fruit and groceries; Hurley & Warrington, hardware, harness and farm machinery; P. A. Carlson, M. D. C., veterinarian; John M. Browning, hotel; J. H. McAdams, furniture;



H. C. Chase, Jr., successor to Chase Bros., druggist; J. P. Nelson, harness and machinery; Moomey Bros., butchers; Deardorf & Duke, farm machinery; Miss Nannie Serven, millinery; Mrs. O. H. Moomey, millinery; M. L. Lamb, collections and insurance; L. S. Ellsworth, attorney and solicitor; John Meek, livery; Dr. A. E. Robertson, physician and surgeon; John Taylor & Son, blacksmiths; J. T. Castellaw, blacksmith; grain dealers: Central Granaries Co., W. C. Rusmisse agent; Tierney & Wirt, James Fairfield, agent; Dierks Lumber and Coal Co., E. Myers agent; M. B. Bunnell and James Fairfield, live stock; H. L. Crosley, dray and express; M. E. Kellenberger, agent for the B. & M. railroad; J. H. Walch, miller; G. F. Frasier, barber; Weimer Bros., painters and paper hangers; Harvey Myers, photographer; H. W. Snook, optician and jeweler; Mason City Mill, John Seeley proprietor; former owner, J. W. Willis. Postoffice established 1886, George W. Runyan postmaster. The spring of 1887 W. C. Rusmisse succeeded Mr. Runyan. In April, 1889, L. B. Hill was appointed postmaster. M. C. Warrington succeeded Mr. Hill in September, 1893, and served until January 1, 1898, when he was succeeded by R. K. Miller, who is still postmaster.

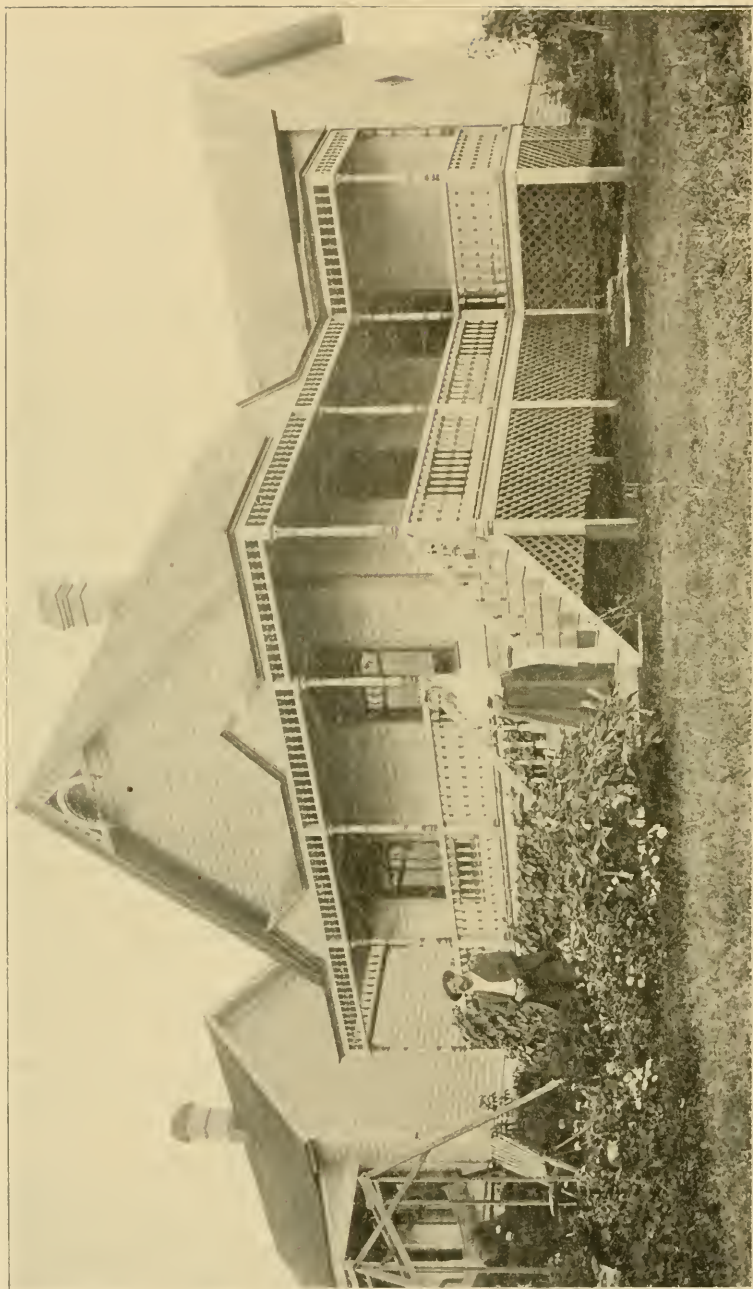
The first merchant to do business in the village was A. Gates, who opened a store in July, 1886, in a small shed building. R. B. Walker was Mr. Gates' clerk. Mr. Gates retired from business in 1900. The first railroad train to enter the townsite was on July 27, 1886, and the then few residents of the town had a joyful celebration. Mason City was incorporated in 1887, and the school district, No. 169, was also organized in 1887. The schools of the village have always been kept up to the highest standard of excellence.

There have been some exciting occurrences in the history of Mason City. In November, 1886, a store building owned and occupied by Mack & McEndeffer, was destroyed by fire and three persons, J. J. Hoagland, Malcolm Miller and Malcolm McEndeffer, lost their lives. On July 2, 1892, a cyclone visited Mason City and vicinity and damage to the amount of \$20,000 was done in the village. The school house, two churches and many other buildings were destroyed. A great deal of damage was also done in the country surrounding the town. The religious interests of the people of Mason City are well looked after. There are three church buildings, the Baptist, J. R. Woods, resident pastor; this was the first church organized, and has a large membership; the M. E. people erected a handsome church edifice in 1899; the Catholic church organization have a neat and commodious place of worship, and services are supplied by Rev. Father Flannigan of Dale.

The valley of the Muddy, in which Mason City is so favorably located, is from two to three miles wide and has been so often described by the enthu-

siastic tourist that to speak now of its superior advantages and adaptability to the requirements of the farmer and stockman would be superfluous. It is traversed throughout its length by the Muddy, a clear stream of pure spring water, which at many places, and particularly at Mason City, has been utilized as a water power of an almost unlimited capacity, by simply throwing a short dam across it. The valley at this point is about three miles broad. Going north across the valley we come to the hills, which at a glance seem rough, but a closer inspection discloses beautiful sequestered parks, broad terraces and level prairie land, very inviting to the eye of the agriculturalist. Actual experience has demonstrated the soil of these lands to be as rich and productive as the valley land. Even the rougher hills and steeper declivities show the prolific nature of the soil by covering themselves to the very top with a luxuriant growth of grass that affords pasturage for stock second to none in the Union. Further north a few miles is Clear Creek valley, from two to three miles in width, thickly dotted over with unmistakable signs of thrift and prosperity. Here is one of the oldest settlements in the county, and the farmers are comfortably wealthy and happy. This valley extends from the northwest to the southeast, and is almost parallel with the Muddy valley, with which it unites some distance below. Mason City is reached from this valley through canons which nature has provided as natural road beds, with easy road grades over the summit. An arm of this valley is called Elk valley, which winds up to the high lands and spreads out, forming Lee's park, a broad expanse of level land of several thousand acres in extent, and containing a thriving settlement of well-to-do farmers. This country is all tributary to Mason City. For a distance of three or four miles south of town the country is gently rolling, well adapted to cultivation and grazing, and answering well the description of the country on the north side, except instead of terminating in several valleys, it rises to a level valley called "The Basin," which contains some ten square miles of extraordinarily rich farming land, and is occupied by a class of farmers that would do credit to any country. What we say of the people of the basin, however, may equally apply to those of the whole country we are describing. They are Americans, as a rule, of education and intelligence, with here and there one of the better class of Germans, Swedes, Danes and Norwegians.

From Mason City, in every direction in the highlands, we find in addition to the valleys and tables mentioned, a system of narrow valleys, small tables, high parks and terraces, separated by hills too steep and irregular for cultivation, but richly covered with a generous coat of native grass, and affording pasture much superior to the longer grasses upon the meadows of the val-



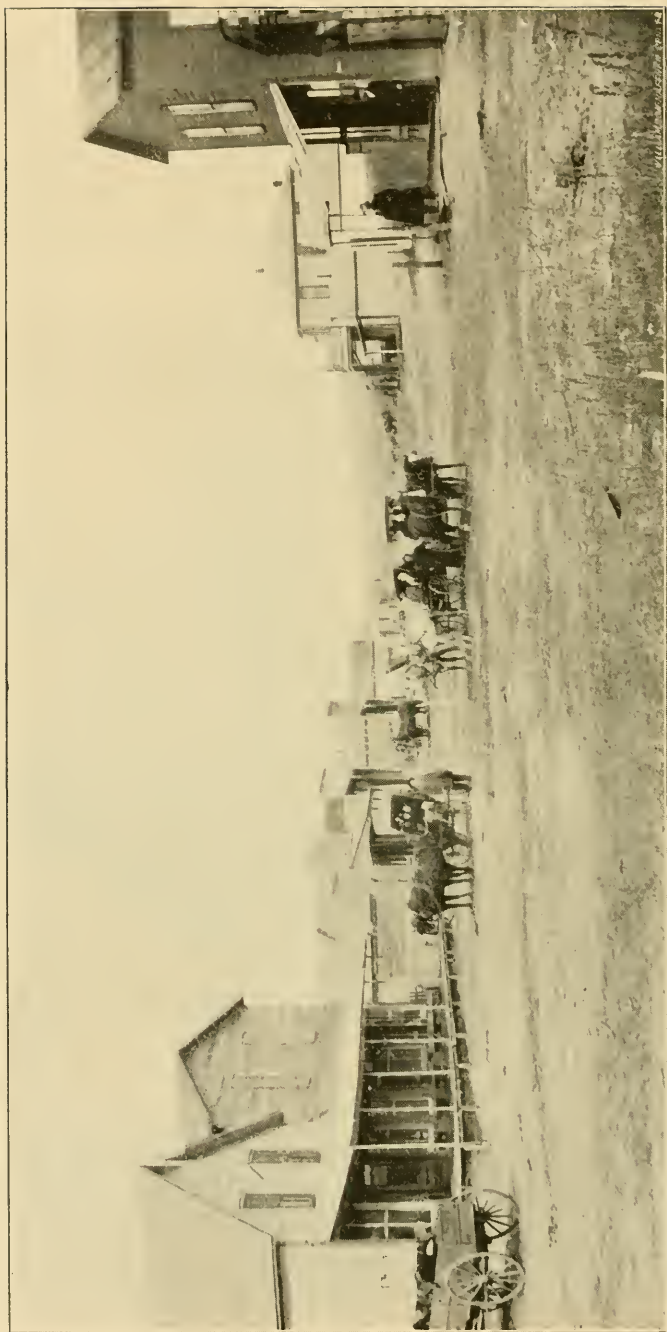
Residence of M. C. Warrington, Mason City.

leys and tables. This pasture has a peculiarity which distinguishes it from all others. The grass is equally nutritious in winter and in summer, and stock will fatten here in January when there is nothing in a state of nature in the meadow to sustain life. The valley of Elk Creek, one of the beautiful little valleys of Custer county, is almost wholly tributary to Mason City. This valley is settled by a good, thrifty class of farmers, who have fine homes and farms and are a prosperous and happy people. \* \* \* The shiftless, restless, migrating homesteader, who remained long enough to prove up and get a mortgage on his land, has given way for the more thrifty, more prudent, and more industrious farmer and stock raiser. The business men and farmers of the southeastern quarter of Custer county welcome the twentieth century with a feeling that there is still greater prosperity for all who apply business methods, honesty and industry to their transactions.

Among the earlier settlers of this part of Custer county who yet remain on their original homesteads, we might mention James R. Lang, James Bingham of Round Grove, Samuel Weaver, Sr., and his two sons, S. L. Weaver and S. W. Weaver; James McAllister, a former Union Pacific conductor, John O. Jackson, John A. Hall, John A. Amsberry, Jacob Cover, W. Z. Amsberry, J. C. Peterson, Niels Anderson, Mrs. Mary Holm, Oscar Estby, Louis Lee, William Purcell, formerly deputy sheriff, W. T. Whitehead, H. T. Coffman, Mrs. Francis Amsberry, J. H. Brand, C. R. Young, P. M. Dady, Q. J. Dady, L. L. Dady, R. R. Martin, Peter Simonsen, Elisha King, Eli Cole, John Spencer, James Gauley, J. M. Lowry, M. M. Stender, John Walker, John Jelinek, Samuel English, James Smith, Sr., James Smith, Jr., Frank Jennings, Chris Sainp, Fred Trennt, Joseph Jelinek, E. W. Tufford, Anton Dobesh, John Flynn, Mrs. Thorn, William Burke, B. P. Morris and others whom we cannot mention for lack of space. We are well represented in this part of Custer county by good schools and churches in various localities, Sunday schools, postoffices and other facilities and comforts of civilization.







Main Street of Arnold, Neb.

## Arnold.

Arnold is a small town located in the western part of Custer county, on the South Loup river. It was named in honor of George Arnold, who located in the vicinity in 1876, and who was a member of the ranch firm of Arnold & Ritchie. The northeast quarter of section 28, township 17, range 25, on which Arnold stands, was located as a claim by R. E. Allen, who established a small store in his sod house in 1882. The town was laid out in 1883, and a large building erected by S. E. Edwards, which was occupied by Blum Bros. as a general store. In 1884 Ben Hardin put in a general store, and the same year William Ray established a blacksmith shop, R. A. Probert a hardware store, C. L. Long a drug store, while a water power flouring mill was built by S. Leland & Sons. The postoffice had been established in 1877 at the ranch of Arnold & Ritchie, three-quarters of a mile from the present site of the village, but in 1881 it was moved to the residence of R. E. Allen. Dr. J. H. Murray located in 1884 and practiced his profession there until 1890. In 1886 John Finch and Virgil Cannon put in a drug store, Alexander Robertson a bank, and Miss Mary Robertson a millinery store. In due time a hotel and the various other lines of business common to villages of its class were established. The present population of the village is about 150, and the following lines of business are represented: A. G. & M. E. Hoffman, general merchandise; Allen & Son, hardware and implements and livery; Frank Anson, hotel; C. C. Parsons, barber shop; Albert Hansberry, jeweler; F. E. Needham, grocery and meat market; Joseph Pease, blacksmith shop; William Ray, breeder of fine horses and jacks; Ben Hardin, general store, hardware and undertaking; T. H. B. Beach, general merchandise and dealer in live stock; R. E. Allen, dealer in all kinds of live stock; David R. Parks, ice dealer; John Finch, druggist; B. E. Robinson, physician; W. M. Beach, postmaster; Alvin Harris, miller, who operates the Arnold roller mills, with a capacity of sixty barrels per day. The Arnold school is in charge of Miss Amy Robinson. The morality of the community is kept up to a high grade by three churches, Christian, Baptist and Methodist.

The country surrounding Arnold cannot be excelled for fertility. Stock raising is an industry of great importance and is bound to become more so in the future. A railroad has just been surveyed from Callaway to Gandy, Arnold being one of the stations on the line. Through the enterprise of Ben Hardin, a telephone line has recently been constructed to Callaway, connecting the village with the rest of the world.

## Settlement of Cliff Table.

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One of the first settlers on this table land was J. B. Klump, who took a homestead and timber claim in section 12, township 17, range 23, in March, 1883. D. W. Widaman and B. F. Cole were the first settlers on the northeast part of this table. Sammel High also located about the same time that Klump did, and dug a well 350 feet deep, but it was not a success. During the same year there arrived three brothers by the name of Lang, with their father and mother, and John and Moses Truesdale. In the spring of 1885 came Peter F. Forney, Charles Blakesman, Charles Zachary, Daniel Sweeney and John Wehling. These settlers dug cisterns near the lagoons and cemented them, which held water from the melted snow and rains for some months. When the cisterns became dry the only recourse was to haul water in barrels from the valley two or three miles distant, and any one who is acquainted with the steepness of the ascent up to the table land can imagine what a task it was. In addition they often had to pay 5 cents per barrel for the water. As they not only had to haul water for their household use, but for whatever stock they had, Mr. Forney started in to haul water in two barrels, but he soon found that process too slow. He had four horses, four head of cattle and some hogs, and as it took over half of his time hauling water, he almost begrudged the poor beasts what they wanted to drink. Peter Forney was the first man to put down a gravel well on the table. It was an iron casing well, 444 feet deep and cost him \$600. For two years this well supplied the families of Wideman, Cox, Maupin, Hill, Blakeman, Taylor, Cooney and Pike. Mr. Forney had to mortgage his farm in order to put down this well, and by the time it was paid for the interest, added to the principal, amounted to \$1,050.

At this writing this table land is thickly settled. It has won the reputation of being the best wheat-producing portion of Custer county, and contains some splendid farms. Most of the sod buildings have given way to fine residences of wood and the commodious barns and outbuildings impart a most prosperous appearance to the table. Windmills are seen by the score and the water problem no longer troubles the people of that community. The table is fifteen miles long and has an average width of four miles. From its edges, which rise almost abruptly from the valleys below, a magnificent view of the surrounding country can be had. The soil is exceedingly rich and fertile, and in favorable seasons very large crops are raised.

## Dead Man's Canon.

The following account of the shooting of a half-breed Mexican was published in the Callaway Courier in July, 1887:

For some time past numerous complaints have been made of robberies committed by unknown parties in unoccupied houses. Everything seemed to be acceptable to the thieves. Monday afternoon Mr. Simon Landis came into town and swore out a warrant before Justice Deems for the arrest of two men, names unknown, who had robbed him of harness and other articles to the value of \$36, and had also stolen some carpenter tools from the house of Henry Schuette.

The warrant was placed in the hands of Mr. Fred Jephcott, constable of Noel, and L. M. Holman, constable of Callaway, for service. These gentlemen immediately started up the valley in pursuit, and struck the trail at Finch-Hatton's ranch and followed it to Arnold, where they got a fresh team and were joined by the Arnold constable, Mr. Brown. The party followed the trail north to Hackberry canon, and all along the road heard of the depredations committed by the robbers. They had at one place left their old wagon and taken a better one, but the trade was to their injury, for the wagon they stole had wire wrapped around a loose tire and left a distinct mark on the road that was easily seen. They also stole a gun, four silk handkerchiefs and a revolver. The Callaway constable held the trail while the Arnold contingent scouted around. After finding the search in the canon useless the party went on up the road to Anselmo, where they again changed horses. From there the pursuers followed traces of the robbers to a point three miles north of Dale, when they found the robbers had doubled in their road and gone to Luce's canon. When the constables got there they found that the robbers had gone to Merna the night before (Monday) and stopped there over night.

By this time the constables were tired out, having traveled a day and a night without rest or food, so they went on to Broken Bow, having sent out scouts to scour the country around.

Sheriff Penn being absent from town, the constables, with some deputies, started out with two teams. The Callaway constable, Mr. L. M. Holman, the Noel constable, Mr. Fred Jephcott and Mr. Joseph Trout, with a driver, were in one wagon, and the rest of the party were in the other. At about dusk they met a man on the main road at the mouth of the canon, who told them that the robbers were coming. The officers then separated into two parties, the Callaway party taking to the right and the others to the left.



This canon is six miles north of Broken Bow, one-half mile north of Peter Mohat's stock farm, on land belonging to the Hunter ranch, since known as Dead Man's canon.

At the edge of the canon they met the robbers in a wagon with bows but no cover. Mr. Jephcott, who took command, immediately on seeing them shouted "Halt!" telling the robbers to surrender, as his party were officers come to arrest them. No attention was paid by the robbers, when Mr. Jephcott ordered them to halt three times more.

At the fourth warning the officers saw a flash through the dusk, and could plainly see the men reaching for their Winchester rifles, which were hanging on the bows on each side of the wagon. The word to fire was then given and the Callaway party opened upon the robbers, being immediately followed by the Arnold party. At the first fire one of the men who was sitting on the side of the wagon furthest away from the Callaway party, sprang from the wagon to the ground, dead. A rifle bullet had passed through his body, entering at his left side and passing out at the right. The other man fell to the bottom of the wagon box and the horses went tearing down the canon.

The officers at once followed and overtook the team a mile and a half away, but the other man had escaped on a saddle horse that had been tied to the wagon. Half an hour after the slaying Sheriff Penn arrived on the scene. He at once took possession of the wagon, team and the corpse of the dead man and brought them to Broken Bow.

The half-breed Mexican man was about twenty-five years of age, six feet high and well built. Inside his shirt, covered with clotted blood, was found a badge of the Cincinnati detective force.

The wagon box was half full of miscellaneous articles, which they had probably stolen. Among them were several guns, revolvers, saddles, clocks, carpenter tools, silk handkerchiefs and other articles.

A coroner's jury was empaneled and immediately brought in a verdict that the killing was justified and that the officers were blameless.

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## Deonto.

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Deonto is located on the Kearney & Black Hills branch of the Union Pacific railroad, fifty-two miles west of Kearney and fifteen miles southeast from Callaway, the present terminus of the road. It is situated in Wood River valley, one of the many beautiful valleys in Custer county, and was located in

the fall of 1887 by the Lincoln Townsite Company, who bought 160 acres of land of Wallace Highbee for the purpose. R. G. Crossett and Johnson put up the first general store. The next store building was moved from Lodi, being the pioneer building used as a store in this portion of Custer county. Built by John Moran. This store was occupied by W. D. Cox as a general store. H. Beckman built the hotel now owned by George Mary, Lewis Wambsgan built the first livery stable, which was run by Godloup Bensler.

The men now doing business in this hustling little village are three general stores, R. E. Brigam, George Mary and W. A. Dickman; Al. Funda, restaurant and summer drinks; Mrs. George Mary, hotel; Mr. Mary, besides a general store, has a lumber yard and sells coal; Drs. Wade & Wade; John Middleswartz, livery and feed stable; R. C. Chumbley and A. Conard buy and sell live stock; Fred Woods, blacksmith; two grain dealers, the Omaha Elevator Company, H. Champan & Co.; A. Narrigan, feed mill; milliner, Mrs. George Mary; G. C. Mullen, Charles Redfern, hydraulic well business; S. K. Davis, contractor and builder.

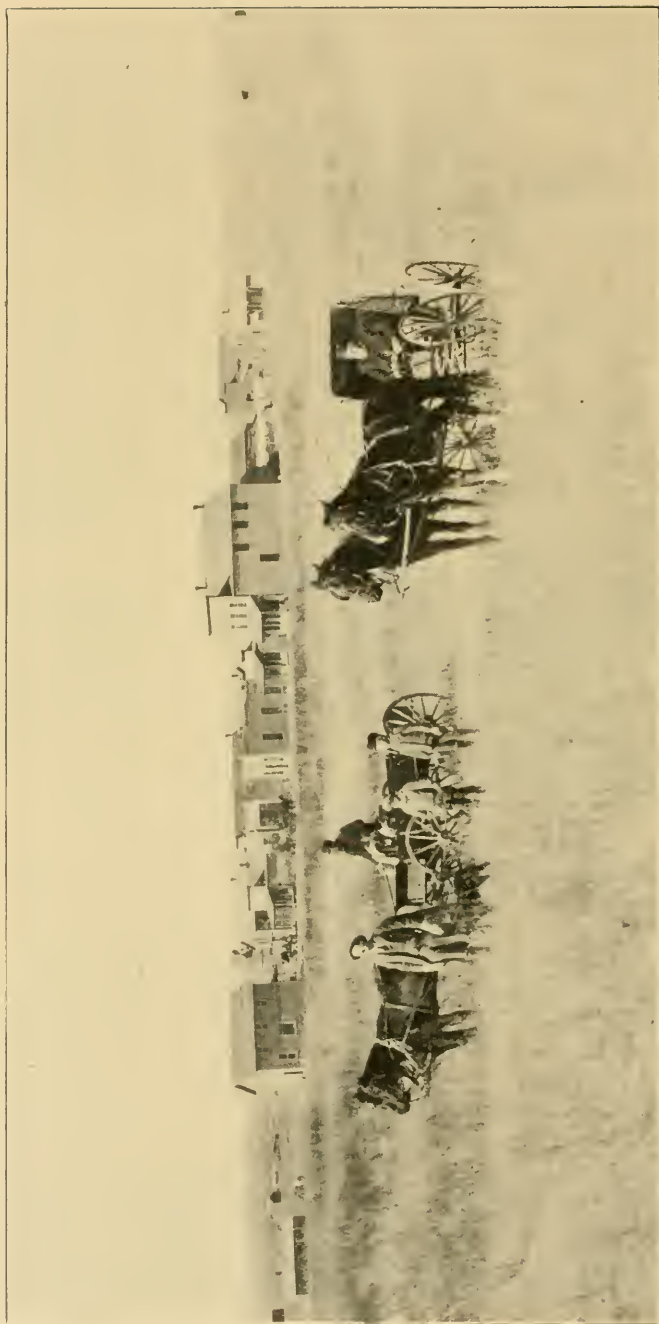
The morals of the little village of Oconto are well looked after by three church denominations: Catholic church, established in 1889, Rev. Pedlock of Kearney officiating; the Episcopal church, established in 1890, preaching supplied from Kearney; also the Evangelical church, completed and dedicated in April, 1901. Oconto also has a nine-months fine school every year; present teacher, Miss Marie Walch.

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## Comstock.

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The village of Comstock, the youngest town in Custer county, is located on the east bank of the Middle Loup river on the Aurora & Sargent extension of the B. & M. railroad. The town was located and surveyed in 1899. A store building was moved over from Westcott by W. H. Comstock and located on the new townsite, which was named in honor of him. Frank Lemon opened up a grocery store in this building. On September 25th James Hines began the blacksmithing business. On October 1st Frank and John Currie began buying grain, commencing at the same time the erection of an elevator. On October 3rd the railroad company opened its station for business, P. C. Croaker agent. On October 4th Dierks Lumber and Coal Company, John Dierks, manager, unloaded its first shipment of coal at this point. On Octo-



COMSTOCK.

The Youngest Town in Custer County. Located on the B. & M. between Arcadia and Sargent, on the Middle Loup River.



Powell Family. Three generations back. Grandpa and Grandma Powell in center.

ber 10th Robert Stone began buying stock, with H. H. Wheeler as agent, followed in December by Mr. Parks, both building stock yards. In October a general hardware and implement store was opened. The postoffice opened for business November 19th with S. T. Stevens as postmaster. The hotel was completed and opened to the public in November, but was soon found to be too small for the proper accommodation of the traveling public. A feed and sale stable was in operation in December. Walter Hammond opened a barber shop in December, and Albert Apperson commenced the draying business at the same time. January, 1900, M. I. Fried opened with a line of implements. Elias Cleveland finished his dwelling and moved into it in February. J. F. Wescott, contractor and builder, moved into town in February, but did not complete his dwelling until the following May. F. H. Kernohan had his brick store and residence ready for occupancy in May. In September J. W. Comstock opened a harness store and repair shop. In December Wescott & Gibbons



moved their general merchandise store from the west side of the river and began business in Comstock. In January, 1901, Frank Hammond began business in a new blacksmith and wagon repair shop. R. R. Bangs moved into the hotel in January. C. N. McWorthy built his house for a residence, millinery and dressmaking store in February. In March the Modern Woodmen commenced the erection of a two-story building, the ground floor to be used as a drug store, bank and meat market, and the upper floor for a public hall. A commodious school house was built in the fall of 1900. The first child born in the village of Comstock was Helen Apperson, February 23, 1900.

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## Settlement of Dale Valley.

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J. J. Downey.

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About the 10th day of June, 1889, in company with R. D. McCarthy and family and two of his teamsters, we started for our future home in Custer county. We arrived at Seneca, where we found the beginning of a rising young town, it being one and a half miles up Clear creek from the present town of Westerville. We stayed over night at the house of George Copsey, one of the old pioneers of the place. We were now within one day's travel of our destination. We crossed over to the Muddy the next forenoon. We camped for dinner near the present site of Broken Bow. The only settlers we found close by were Wilson Hewitt and Dan Lewis. Mr. Hewitt was the proprietor of a blacksmith shop which we afterwards patronized. That evening we obtained our first view of the Muddy Flats, as it was called at that time. We paused on the brow of the table and the male portion of the company descended and threw up their hats with a "hurrah," for lo, and behold! there it lay in full view—the promised land. Descending from the table we arrived at the first settler's cabin, which, by the way, was not of sod, but cedar logs, the only one of its kind on the flats as far as I know. There we got some water and a kindly greeting from the proprietor, Sam Dunning. On our way from Dunning's place to our present location we passed the dugout of A. Thomas, a genial young bachelor. There were several other young men staying with him who had as yet not erected their future mansions. It was now about sundown and four more miles to the end of our journey. At about dusk

we arrived at our claims and found there, on land adjoining, William Couhig, who had preceded us by ten days. He had made considerable progress with his work, having put down a well, which proved to be a great convenience. The well was dug by C. R. Krenz, an expert in that line of business, who still resides in Dale valley, and was the father of the first born in Dale.

Among the settlers that came in that summer were the following: Willaim Corcoran, Patrick Kilfoil, after whom Kilfoil precinct was named; William Walsh and family, Joseph Sitler, another young bachelor; George W. Hartley, who was the first settler in Ortello valley; Andy Sommer, Charles Foote, Lenn Thomas, Charles Johnson and John Jaquot, all of whom built residences out of prairie sod, with some of Uncle Sam's cedar for rafters, which at that time was comparatively plentiful in the canons from ten to thirty miles west of here. There was no corn raised close by, except a small amount down on Victoria creek, in 1880, and that was held at 50 and 60 cents per bushel, and could be had for no price in the spring. Crops were good in 1881, and those who had ground broken out and raised corn were all right, having plenty for feed and a good home market for the balance, at a price ranging from 50 to 75 cents per bushel.

Several other settlers came during the year 1880 and took up claims, but did not permanently locate here until 1882. J. J. Joyner was the only settler that moved in during 1881, and he located in Ortello valley. In 1882 the following came: Conrad Fleischman, Christopher Nichols, James Daley, James Wood, G. N. Thompson, Charles Fodge, S. H. Reed, James Stanford, G. W. Land, Samuel Trout, all with their families. About this time the Dalepostoffice was established with James Daley as postmaster, who afterwards resigned in favor of D. S. Lohr, who went into the general merchandise business in Dale, getting quite a trade from fifty to seventy-five miles west and north of here. In fact it was a typical frontier store. The town of Dale was laid out the previous summer. Dale tried hard for the railroad, but the company could not see it in that way. We are, however, admirably located in regard to railroad towns, Merna being five or six miles southeast and Anselmo eight or nine miles northwest.

The next two or three years the following named settlers moved here: J. A. Kellenbarger, William Moore, Charles Michele, Frank Michele, C. H. Cass, G. D. Grove, C. C. Grove, Henry Sweeney, Dan Foley, A. Glidewell, P. B. Riley, Jason Lucas, A. C. Towle, Henry Barrett, William Brookman, I. A. Coleman, Dr. L. L. Crawford, James Phillips, Thomas Kelley, Joseph Vessels and R. J. Kelley, the last named being a pioneer merchant, one of the present firm of Kelley & Duncan, who in 1886 moved to Merna, where he has been in

business ever since. Nick Jaquot came about the same time, or perhaps a little before. He is a man of great enterprise, being largely interested in farming, stock raising and feeding, also proprietor of one of the Merna elevators, and a hog buyer. C. D. Pelham, the pioneer merchant of Broken Bow, afterwards moved to Dale, where he did business for several years, finally moving to Anselmo, where he now resides. \* \* \* Dale has a fine Catholic church and parsonage, also a cemetery and some real estate property worth several thousand dollars. The church was built in 1886 by the Rev. T. P. Haley, now resident pastor of the North Platte church. Our present pastor is the Rev. P. Flannagan, a man loved and respected by all.

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### St. Andrew's Catholic Church, Dale

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Rev. T. P. Haley.

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The Dale mission was established some time in 1882 by Rev. Father Boyle. The first ones to ask for a priest, as far as the writer knows, were J. J. Downey and Robert McCarthy. Father Boyle was the first priest, and visited Dale valley in 1882 to administer to the wants of the few families that first settled there. He made the Dale mission a regular station. Mass was said alternately at each house. During Father Hayes' administration the people made preparations to build a church. The building was to be brick, and for the purpose of obtaining the material with which to build the church a brick yard was laid out on one of Mr. McCarthy's claims. One hundred thousand bricks were made and burned for the church. Lumber was purchased and hauled from Grand Island, a distance of 150 miles. About this time the people had spent over \$800, but on account of the new railroad which was soon to be built through this section to the Black Hills, the church was not built at that time, as difficulties arose as to where the church should be located. Some wanted it on their farms or near their homes, while others wanted it built at Merna or Anselmo. The old settlers advocated building it at Dale. Father Hayes' last visit to the mission found matters in a worse condition than ever. In June, 1886, Father Hayes was appointed pastor of the church at O'Connor, Greeley county, and his assistant, Father Haley, was made pastor of Kearney and its missions, which included Dale. To his sur-



Dale Church. Present Pastor Rev. Flanagan.

prise, when he visited Dale mission, he found a divided people, caused by the disputes as to the location of the church. After a consultation with the principal members of the mission it was decided to lay the matter before Bishop O'Connor. This was some time in July, 1886. In about a week Bishop O'Connor ordered the church to be built at Dale. It is easy to imagine the joy of the old settlers, J. J. Downey, Robert McCarthy, William Conhig, Con Fleischman, William Walsh, Robert Kelley, George Grove, Chris. Grove, William Brookman and Chis. Micheal, when they learned of the bishop's decision. A subscription list was opened and the necessary preparations made to begin work as soon as possible. The bricks already burned were of poor quality and not sufficient in quantity for a brick building. Some were used for the foundation of the residence and church and the chimneys. The balance were sold, out of which was realized some \$400. There was a loss of about the same amount. Nearly all the lumber that had been hauled from



Grand Island had been made use of by some kind friends who thought it well to help themselves. A few pieces of dimension lumber, with the shingles, remained for the use for which they had been purchased. The lumber for the church and residence was purchased from Goodman, Bogue & Co., Kearney, and shipped to Broken Bow, then hauled to Dale by team, the hauling being done by the members of the mission. On the 6th day of November, 1886,



Rev. Flanagan, present Pastor of Dale Church.

Father Haley was appointed the first residence pastor of Dale. He arrived on the above date at the beginning of one of the worst blizzards that state has ever had. For three days he was snowbound at the home of J. J. Downey. When the storm was over the foundation for the residence was begun. Many hands made light work. In a few weeks the residence was partly completed and Father Haley moved into and lived in it for nearly two years before it was properly plastered. Mass was said in the south half of the residence until the church was built. One fine day in November—the very last day of the month—several of the old settlers met to break ground for the church. While so doing George Grove said to Father Haley: "Father, to-day is St. Andrew's day; would it not be a good idea to name the church St. Andrew's Church?" Father Haley paused and said: "Men, what do you think?" They all assented, and hence the Church of St. Andrew's at Dale received its name. The church was built, but was not completed for several years. Notwithstanding the difficulties under which the church and residence were built, sufficient

notes were given by the members to pay the debt and these were deposited with the lumber company to pay for the lumber. Father Haley governed the parish with success, and in October, 1888, a successful mission was given by the famous Father Ramen, for which the people gave him \$118.25 for one week's work. After this mission Father Hoecheisel was sent to Dale as an assistant to Father Haley. January 8th, Father Hoecheisel was appointed pastor of Dale under the supervision and direction of Father Haley, who then moved to Broken Bow to take charge of that church and the missions attached. Father Hoecheisel remained but a short time as pastor of Dale and Father Donahue was sent to take his place. He in turn was succeeded by Father Flood, who was followed by Father Flanagan, the present pastor.

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## Rev. Thomas P. Haley.

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The Alliance Times, published at Alliance, Nebraska, has the following to say of this well-known priest:

"Rev. Thomas P. Haley is well known throughout Nebraska as one of the most energetic and indefatigable workers for the Catholic church. He is a native of Pennsylvania, was educated for the priesthood in Canada, and was ordained twelve years ago. Prior to his coming to Alliance he had charge of the Broken Bow mission. During his stay in Alliance his labors have been unceasing towards uplifting and benefiting in every way members of his faith, and he commanded the highest respect and esteem of the citizens of the town, owing to his manly and virtuous qualities. He gave up this mission on August 1, 1897, and is now stationed at North Platte."

The sod and frame buildings in the above illustration represent places in Buffalo, Valley, Custer, Thomas, Sherman and Box Butte counties, Nebraska, where mass was said by Father Haley before he built the church, from 1886 to 1897, when he was sent to North Platte. One picture shows the effect of a cyclone on a church, another represents the execution of a young man at Broken Bow, Nebraska. After the church at Dale was built, St. Joseph's Church at Broken Bow was built, July 29, 1888. For some time Dale mission was the center whence Father Haley did his church work. During June, 1887, he built a church at Ravenna, Buffalo county. When he removed to Broken Bow it was made the principal mission. During November, 1891, a church was built at Oconto, Nebraska. December, 1889, a church was built at Mason City, Nebraska. There are four Catholic churches in Custer county.



## How Custer Center Church Was Built.

M. F. Blakenship.

On the 28th day of November, 1881, O. M. Kem and the writer boarded a train at East Lynn, Vermilion county, Illinois, and started for the grand state of Nebraska. The gentlemen who introduced us to Custer county were C. D. Pelham, pioneer merchant and postmaster of Broken Bow, and John DeMerritt, and with the aid and kindness of Mr. Pelham and County Clerk-elect Wilson Hewitt, we located claims and returned to Kearney to make preparations to return to our new homes. In March, 1882, we returned and took up our residence in Custer county, about five miles northeast of Broken Bow, my neighbors at that time being H. C. Rayner, Charley Raymond, J. D. Ream, O. M. Kem, and James Courtney. During the following summer and fall others began to locate in our neighborhood, and by the spring of 1883 we had plenty of neighbors. We had no preaching at all. During the winter of 1883 I was introduced to the Rev. Theodore Squires, who was stopping with Attorney J. S. Kirkpatrick at Broken Bow. I invited him to preach at my home, so he made an appointment, and when the time came, he had a good audience, and invited all who wished to unite with the United Brethren Church to meet him on Wednesday following at Broken Bow at the home of J. S. Kirkpatrick. At the time appointed a class was organized consisting of the following members: John S. Kirkpatrick and wife, James Courtney and wife, and M. F. Blankenship, who was chosen class leader. James Courtney was chosen steward and the class was named the Custer Center Class. In about three weeks the Rev. John F. Green was sent to preach for us and was our pastor for two years, loved and respected by all. Our numbers increased and religious interest was aroused until we began to feel that a church building was a necessity, but we were all so poor that we did not feel able to build it. I was led to speak to J. S. Kirkpatrick about it, but he thought it a pretty big undertaking. I asked him to draw up a subscription paper and I would do the soliciting and also give the ground for the building. He did so, and headed the paper with \$10 opposite his name. I put my name next with \$10. Then came C. T. Crawford with \$10, R. H. Miller with \$5. This was encouraging. I had \$35 pledged before leaving town and I felt sure that the church would be built. In May we met and laid up the walls of sod. A few days afterwards, as I was plowing in my field, a man with a mule team drove up and inquired if I was the man who was building the church. I replied that I was as much interested in it as any one. He then said his name was David Weimer; that he was on his way to Kearney, and that with my permission he would stay with me all night on his return and give me \$10 to apply on the church building fund. I made him welcome, and true to his word he did as



he said he would. In June two of our bachelor neighbors, John R. Street and Elmer Morris, volunteered to haul the lumber from Kearney, and by the latter part of that month we had the roof on and the building was inclosed. But we had no seats, neither money with which to procure them, so we built some sod pillars and laid boards on them, scattered some hay on the dirt floor, and the next Sunday the whole neighborhood assembled in the new church, as much pleased as if they had been in the finest building in the state. We had a place in which to worship, and it was with a feeling of pride that we wrote back to our friends in the East that we had a new church in our neighborhood. At the first meeting in the new church we organized a Sunday school and I think L. L. Southmayd was the first superintendent. In December following we met and arranged for a Christmas tree to be had Christmas eve, but having no floor on our place of worship money had to be raised to procure one. By Christmas eve we had not only a floor, but a rostrum and a few seats, homely, but good enough, and we felt proud of our success. Our Christmas tree and exercises were a grand success, and I have often thought I never saw a happier man than was Judge W. W. Cowles on that night—in fact everybody seemed happy. On the summer following we finished the seating and our church was completed and paid for. Shortly after the church was inclosed the Rev. Pierce from Broken Bow came and organized a M. E. class at the church, and held meetings there for several years, preaching every alternate Sunday, and I may say that both the U. P. and M. E. classes worshipped in harmony and with few exceptions were in love and sweet friendship until the M. E. class was finally dissolved, some going to Broken Bow, some uniting with the U. P.'s while others left the neighborhood. Custer Center church still stands in a very good state of preservation, a monument of the struggles for a higher and nobler life made by the early pioneers of Custer county.

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### Christian Church, Broken Bow.

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Elder T. B. McDonald.

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The plea for the restoration of primitive Christianity has met with the usual amount of difficulties and opposition in Custer county, as the plea has been against division and creed. The first preacher of the plea for a return to primitive preaching and practice in the county was Elder E. D. Eubank, who lives at Broken Bow and preaches at various places. Elder Eubank and wife came to what has since become Custer county in 1874. Mr. Eubank was the first county superintendent of schools of Custer county, and his wife the first school teacher.

The first Church of Christ in the county was organized by Elder L. J. Correll, a much loved and venerable father in Israel, who still resides near Arnold near the scene of his first labors in the county. Father Correll, as he is familiarly called, moved to Arnold in the spring of 1883, and preached his first sermon there on April 1st to twenty-five hearers. Meetings were held



Christian Church Building, Broken Bow, from a kodac picture.

in the house of William Frazier for a time, until a church was organized, which occurred on July 11, 1884, with thirteen charter members. The following are some of them: L. J. Correll, Mattie Correll, Marcellus Sargent, William Frazier, Charles Tremble and wife, Brother Moffit and wife, and four others. During the year 1885 Elders Henderson and Correll held meetings, with ten added to the membership. A church was built the same year and dedicated by State Evangelist R. C. Barrow. Brother Barrow commended the members for building and dedicating to the Lord a house built of lumber, while they were contented to live themselves in sod houses. The church at Arnold has had protracted meetings at different times, conducted by Elder Correll, Elder J. T. Smith, Elder E. D. Eubank and perhaps others. In the year 1889 Father Correll held a meeting at Powell Valley in a sod school house, with fourteen accessions to the church. These received the hand of Christian fellowship at Arnold. The next year a church was organized at Powell canon with J. D. Myler and C. E. Chesley as elders, and I. L. Wonch and C. H. Sanderson as deacons. This congregation has met with varying fortunes, but has been able to keep up a Sunday school most of the time. Father Correll has been preaching for this church since its organization, except for two or three years when he was away. During a part of this period Brother David Yontzy acted as pastor.

The second organization in Custer county was at Broken Bow, in the month of May, 1886. State Evangelist N. B. Alley was the organizer. The church met for a time in the Baptist church building and for a brief period in a hall. Among the names of the charter members were John Vanhorn, J. B. Farrell, J. J. Brown and wife, and David Brinson and wife. Others were added the same year. Of the charter members there still remain enrolled David Brinson and wife, W. S. Boyce and wife, Mrs. Mary Brown and Mrs. Nellie Humphry. The first officers were appointed by N. B. Alley as follows: Elders, J. J. Brown, W. R. Wiley and B. W. Blair; deacons, John Vanhorn and E. E. Hastings; deaconesses, M. Louisa Brown and Nettie Atkinson and Mrs. Nellie Humphry. In 1887 Elder Eubank became pastor, since which time the work has been firmly established. Meetings have been held by Evangelists Hedges, Shields, Copp, Hunter, McDonald and others. The church building was erected in 1887 and some of the members still tell how the carpenters wrought during the day and the congregation sat on boards and nail kegs at night listening to the preaching of the gospel. The following named preachers have been pastor of the congregation: Eubank, Youtzy, Porter, Pace, Surgeson, Hill, Teagarden and the writer, whose work closed September 1, 1900. The church has a membership of about 150, with R. Ryerson, J. C. Moore and P. H. Munk as elders. This church is strong in its consecrated young people, of which it is quite largely composed.

In 1889 Evangelist Barrow organized a church at Ansley with the following charter members: Brother and Sister Hagin, Gaines, Rigby, Sargent, Rich Hagin, Mary Hagin, Janet Stephenson, Annie Anthony and Fred Hagin. They worshipped in a hall until 1882, when they built a house of their own. This church, like the one at Broken Bow, has had a goodly number of ministers: R. C. Barrow, Fred Hagin, T. A. Hedges, Sherman Hill, J. W. Walker, R. C. Bailey and the present pastor, J. R. Teagarden. The church is prospering, with a membership of 150. The congregation is also doing some missionary work at the Cat Creek church and the McIntosh school house. Other congregations in the county having regular preaching and organized churches are: Coburgh and Gates, where E. D. Eubank ministers. The latter congregation worshipped for a time in the Methodist church. A faithful few still meet at the White Pigeon school house to break bread and keep up the Sunday school. Several other points have been organized, but for lack of workers have disbanded. May the word of the Lord accomplish that whereunto it is sent.

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## Church of God.

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Elder R. Bellis.

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The Nebraska eldership of the Churches of God was organized at Cropsy, Nebraska, October 1, 1875, with the election of the following officers, committees and boards:



Eldership of Church of God meet in a Sod School House.

Officers, G. F. McElwee, speaker; E. D. Aller, clerk; J. R. Paxton, treasurer. Board of Missions, K. A. Moore, E. C. Gilbert, H. H. Hoffer; standing committee, K. A. Moore, E. D. Aller, G. F. McElwee; board of incorporation, G. F. McElwee, E. D. Aller, J. K. Paxton, K. A. Moore, E. C. Gilbert, H. H. Hoffer. Early missionaries under the employ of the board of missions of the general eldership, W. H. Howard, E. D. Aller, R. H. Bolton and D. S. Warner.

Persons having held license from the body not new members of the eldership: E. D. Aller, P. Shaw (dead), P. K. Shoemaker, J. L. Jackson, John Etherton, John Kager, John Figart, A. G. Bogart, Jesse Evans (dead), Jay C. Forncrook, A. Wilson, T. D. Conklin, M. A. Wright, F. C. Gilbert, G. F. McElwee, H. G. Moore, G. E. Irving, J. A. Miller, William Miller, A. B. Slytor (dead), R. A. Slytor, S. M. Waun, S. S. Sheldon (dead), — Marple, G. W. Mizner (dead), E. K. Howe, Mrs. Hattie Ronsey, Sarah L. Hinkley, David Andrews, S. J. Winch, I. V. S. Ford, J. M. Stone, J. G. Young, H. A. Barry, Seth L. Larned, James McCrea, Frederick Brenneman (dead), J. R. Paxton, A. Howe (dead), W. D. Frazie, J. M. Witter, J. J. Hughes, I. S. Clairborn, J. W. Adams, W. W. Parish, A. N. Riness.

Present enrollment of ministers and their address: Elder J. H. Barkey, Lamoure, South Dakota; Richard Bellis, Berwyn, Nebraska; C. W. Clouse, Amelia, Nebraska; W. T. Harris, Barada, Nebraska; E. M. Hickman, Garber, Oklahoma; C. S. Kilmer, Table, Nebraska; A. Marks, Garfield, Nebraska; T. A. Moss, Amelia, Nebraska; I. H. Russel, McKinley, Nebraska; Eli Stark, Berwyn, Nebraska; W. H. Ward, Berwyn, Nebraska; D. B. Zook, Crete, Nebraska; E. J. Thomas, Broken Bow, Nebraska; Sister A. E. Sharp, Courtland, Nebraska; Elder F. A. Sharp, Fairfax, South Dakota. Present number of organizations as local churches, twenty-five. Membership not reported.



## Sunday Schools in Custer County.

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J. M. Fodge.

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In assuming to give to the public a very brief history of the organization and growth of the Sunday schools of our county, I little thought of the obstacles and difficulties which would have to be overcome in order to gather data from which to give a true history. After much fruitless corre-



JAMES FODGE.

spondence and begging for information from those who were, in many cases, participants in the organization of some of the first schools in the county, and after weary months of awaiting answers from living witnesses, I am forced to conclude that the Sunday schools, like very many other objects and enterprises which go to make up the history of a people, state or county, have failed to keep records of any kind, or at best very imperfect records, so that I shall not attempt to give a history of this, one of the greatest factors in the civilization and christianization of our great commonwealth.

In the article to follow, I shall endeavor to give to the public in a general way something of the development and growth of the Sunday school cause since my residence in the county, from the information at my command. Knowing that he who chronicles past events for the scrutiny of the public often receives criticism and even ridicule, I shall, at all times, be governed by the truth as I understand it. Suffice it to say that such a daring, heroic,

and God-fearing people as make up the citizenship of our county would not live in any place long without raising to the God of our fathers some altar as a remembrance of His mercies to them since leaving the old home, which could be done in no more appropriate way than by meeting together to read His word and study His dealings with the children of men. Indeed, to such an extent were they permeated by this spirit of reverence and thankfulness, that in some cases where a little settlement was formed, even though there were none among them who prayed, they would meet and form an organization for the purpose of praising God and civilizing the community. In some cases this work was begun by missionaries, and in others by some local minister, who, with his family, had come west to find a temporal home.

In this connection I am indebted to Elder E. D. Eubank for an account of the organization of the first Sunday school in our county, in what is now Douglass Grove township. This school was organized in the spring of 1875 by Mrs. E. D. Eubank, who was elected as superintendent and secretary, with a membership of twelve, who met at the home of Elder Eubank. It bore the name of "Christian Union Sunday School," and upon application to I. D. Gage, state missionary of the American Sunday School Union, was supplied with second-hand books. It was afterward moved to the home of Charles Hales and changed to a Methodist Episcopal school, and afterward ceased to exist. Prior to the uprising of the Indians, a few men of adventurous and hardy spirits, had settled with their families here and there over parts of the county, viz: on the South Loup, Clear creek, Middle Loup and Victoria creek, abandoned their homes until the dangers were past. Not until about the year 1880 did the pioneers with families settle in numbers sufficiently strong as to begin for the purpose of bringing about a higher state of civilization and Christianity in their respective neighborhoods. We are informed that on the Middle Loup near where Walworth now stands, also on Clear creek near Westerville, schools were organized in the year 1881, but can give no particulars. During the years 1881 and 1882 the settlements in the county extended further west, chiefly along the streams, and in 1883 schools were formed at Broken Bow, Custer Center, Arnold, Delight, Rose Valley and Ortello.

Elder F. M. Graham, a local minister of the M. P. denomination, gathered a few persons at the old sod school house just north of Merna in May of that year, and the school has continued ever since, except, perhaps, the first winter, and now numbers a membership of more than 100. The Ortello school was organized by D. F. Weimer in June at his own home with his family and A. L. Embree and J. H. Edwards—nine persons in all—as members. A year later the place of meeting was changed to the Ortello school house, where it continues to meet during the whole of each year. Rev. Savidge, a Methodist minister, having located near the present site of Callaway, a Sunday school was organized, which languished after a year or two, but was reorganized in 1886 after the town of Callaway was started. In 1883 or 1884 Elder Correll of the Christian church at Arnold gathered a few persons at his home and organized the first Sunday school in that vicinity, and the year following both the Methodist and Baptist people started at and near the same place.

During 1884 and 1885 schools were organized on the South Loup at Burr Oak and Eudell; on Clear creek near Myrtle and Lee Park; on the Muddy near Algernon and Mason City; on the Middle Loup at Sargent, West Union, Oxford school house, and near Milburn; in 1885 on Wood river near Lodi; at Stop Table, Roten Valley, Sand Creek, Cliff, Maple Grove, Berwyn and Keota, many of which have continued to flourish both summer and winter, wielding a most healthful influence for good in the respective localities; while others did "run well for a season" and then when the dark days of drought and financial panic came, succumbed. Up to 1886 the work was carried on in the county locally. Then, as my memory serves me, a movement was made toward organizing a county association for more perfect work, and for the purpose of organizing schools in every settlement, which had by this time spread over nearly the entire county. Among those who were prominent in this movement were Rev. E. A. Russell, a Baptist state Sunday school missionary, located at Ord; Rev. English, of Arnold; I. N. Atkisson, D. M. Amsherry, Willis Cadwell, W. A. Gilmore and Dr. J. J. Pickett of Broken Bow; Mr. J. H. Blair and D. S. Weimer of Ortello. A call was made for a meeting of Sunday school workers at Broken Bow, a program prepared and date fixed for holding a county convention. A temporary organization was effected by electing as president, I. N. Atkisson, and as secretary, Willis Cadwell, and when the convention met a permanent organization was made by adopting a constitution and by-laws. The county was divided into four districts, each part of the county to be under the supervision of a vice president of the county association, elected by that body. It was the intention of the association to divide each of the districts into minor districts, to be known as township associations, with a vice president for each of them, under whose supervision a Sunday school would be organized in every community. This outline of work succeeded admirably in the southeast and northwest quarters, especially to such an extent that in every settlement a school was organized, but in the northeast and southwest quarters there was not such perfect organization and, in fact, the southwest district was practically unrepresented in the county association until ten years later. This association held annual conventions in the years following until the year 1891, when for some unexplained reason there was no call made by the president for the executive committee to meet and prepare a program, so in 1892-3-4 the president, Mr. D. S. Weimer, having removed from the county, leaving the association without a head, it ceased to exist. Many schools in the county died partly from lack of the fostering care of county and district associations, but perhaps more because of the discouragements incident to the excessive drought of 1892-3-4, coupled with the panic which followed, many families removing from the county, leaving homes and all that had been gathered about them since their settlement. This languishing condition of the cause led some of the more zealous workers to take the initiative steps in the resurrection of the county association, or the formation of a new one. Accordingly in the fall of 1895 a call was made for those interested to meet in Broken Bow for the purpose of taking action in the matter. The response thereto met fully the expectations of those who had taken the leading steps, the different parts of the county being

represented. The records of the former association not being obtainable, it was voted to form a new county organization. This was done by electing L. W. F. Cole of Sargent as president, and Mr. Herring as secretary, and appointing Mrs. Herring W. C. Elliott of Mason City and J. M. Fodge of Ortello as a committee on constitution, and the county was again divided into districts, each with a vice president, selected by the district association. Among those prominent in this organization were T. J. Strickler, W. H. Hornday, George Bailey, H. Lomax, E. J. Pittaway, Mrs. Daniel Hagin, W. C. Elliott and others, whose names I do not recall. By means of this association new energy was given to the schools over the county, new schools organized, annual conventions held and a pledge of \$50 made by the old association to the state association was paid, followed by a more hopeful outlook for the future. The present officers of the county association are E. J. Pittaway, president; Rev. Burns, secretary, and David McGugin, P. Wymore, R. E. Allen and W. C. Elliott executive committee.

Many of the noble men and women who were active in the upbuilding of the Sunday school work, have gone to other fields of labor, and others have been called to their reward beyond this life, and their works follow them, while yet others are still doing the Master's work, awaiting that call. Whatever else can be said of the efforts and labors of these consecrated ones all must admit that a higher state of civilization and Christianity pervades our society by reason of the upholding of the Master's standing in this line of work.

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### Lone Star Sunday School.

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Mrs. J. L. Walker.

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Lone Star Sunday school was organized on the second Sunday after the general election of 1881, which makes the date about November 22, 1881. Rev. L. W. F. Cole, then, as now, residing at Sargent, was laboring as missionary of the Methodist Episcopal church in the valley of the Middle Loup and the territory contiguous. At the time named he preached at the residence of Mr. J. L. Walker, a sod building, still standing, a mile north of Walworth bridge, and after the sermon the Sunday school was organized. Mrs. J. L. Walker was elected superintendent and held the office for many years. Mr. Herbert Peters was elected secretary, and Mrs. Herbert Peters treasurer and chorister. There were three classes—the Bible class, taught by Mrs. Walker for sixteen or seventeen years; the intermediate class, taught by John Pfrehm, and the children's class, taught by Mrs. Peters. The school was organized as a union school, but after two years was reorganized as a denominational





Residence of J. L. Walker in West Union Tp., where the first Sunday School in that part of Custer County was held.

school, under the care of the Methodist church, which has maintained a pastoral charge here since work was begun by Mr. Cole.

The school has never died, although its work has usually been suspended from January 1st to April 1st. At the suggestion of Mrs. Peters the school was named "The Lone Star," in the hope that, as the stars shine on from age to age, this school, planted in the wilderness, might continue to be a beacon light to guide the people to a better life. Several of the early workers in this school have been promoted to the school above—Mr. Herbert Peters, Mrs. J. C. Predmore, Mrs. Walter Bedwell and others. The school has itinerated a little in order to secure accommodations. Organized in the dwelling of Mr. Walker, it was moved to Mr. Peters', thence to Mr. Predmore's, thence to a school house east of Mr. Peters', thence to a sod church built by the Methodists at the Walworth bridge, thence to the Walworth school house, whence the "Lone Star" continues to shed forth its cheerful light upon all around.

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### Some Early Sunday Schools.

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Mrs. J. H. Kerr.

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In the spring of 1885 a union Sunday school was organized in what was then called the Osborne school house at Pilot, on Elk creek. As no churches were organized this was the only religious meeting held for miles around. George Hoag was elected superintendent and acted as such for four months, after which the school was superintended by Mrs. J. H. Kerr. Sod walls,

broken benches and no floor made up the surroundings, but peace and good will reigned. S. Flynn, Mr. Collins, W. J. Flagg and wife, J. Osborne, Bert Tracey, George McNeel, William Reese, Mr. Hoag and wife and dozens of others were faithful workers, and from this school has grown the German Evangelical church, a fine frame building. In two years a Sunday school was organized there. Thus the early Sunday school paved the way for the future and Charles Chrisman and family, William Lewis and family, Levi Pringle and family, William and Lester Gibson and families, B. L. Nicholas, J. H. Kerr and family, Mrs. B. L. Larue and children, and many others, labored for years. A frame Baptist church was afterwards built and now has many of the early settlers as members. Some time later a school was organized in Gibson valley, William Shoemaker and wife, Lester Gibson and wife, Mrs. B. F. Larue and others carrying it on, and now a Presbyterian church is organized near where Eudell is now located. This, too, was in a sod house, church organization, and many still look back to the primitive Sunday school as a time of great enjoyment and much profit in the sparsely settled west.

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### United Brethren in Christ.

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Rev. L. L. Epley.

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The United Brethren in Christ were among the pioneers in Custer county, coming in the late '70's. Rev. W. S. Spooner was the first preacher of this denomination to hold regular services in the county, preaching about the year 1876 on the Muddy near Mason City, and also on the Middle Loup near where Sargent now is. Under his supervision Rev. A. L. Pense organized a class near Algernon in 1880, and one in Lee's Park in 1881. In 1882 J. F. Green preached at Algernon, Box Elder, Pilot, Lee's Park, Westerville, Lone Tree, Custer Center and Ortello. From these were organized in 1884 Algernon, Westerville and Custer missions. The first was served by J. F. Green, T. Aikman, J. E. Hawley, S. Dean, B. E. Smith, W. C. Williams and J. L. Brown, and during the drought of 1894 was disorganized by removals. The second was served by S. Dean, J. E. Hawley and B. E. Smith. The last was the only one that survived the drought and removals incident to the early history of our county. In 1885 and 1886 G. F. Deal organized the church in Broken Bow and the following year Ortello circuit, comprising Mount Hope, Ortello, Custer Center and Union valley appointments, was cut off and thus remained until 1894. Broken Bow church was built in 1887 and was served by G. F. Deal, D. W. Proffit, F. W. Brink and G. D. Stromire until 1894, when, losing almost the whole membership by removals, the church was closed until 1897, when F. M. Bell took charge and the church is slowly

but surely regaining its strength. L. L. Epley has charge at this writing, 1900. The people of Custer Center deserve much credit for their loyalty to the church through the years. A class was organized in 1897 by C. W. Bohart in Hoosier valley, and one in 1900 at the Marquis school house. This church has suffered from removals more than any other church in the county. Among those who have been well known throughout the county who were active in the early work of the church we would name J. S. Kirkpatrick, D. F. Weimer, G. R. Street, J. J. Pickett, J. C. Maulick, W. M. Harrell and M. F. Blankenship.

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## Newspapers of Custer County.

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D. M. Amsberry.

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There has been no agency employed that is entitled to more credit for the rapid development and advancement of Custer county from its organization than its newspapers. During the first five years of the county's history there was not a newspaper published in the county. The following is a complete list of the various papers that have been published in the county up to the present time as the writer can procure from the records at his command. While there may be some mistakes, and possibly a few unimportant omissions, we think it is in the main correct:

Westerville—In the fall of 1880 James Westervelt established a store on Clear creek, which was then called Elm Bridge. The name was given the place because of a bridge near by which the settlers had built across the creek of elm logs cut from the canons. Other business men located there that winter and the following spring and in honor of the first resident, James Westervelt, the new town was christened Westerville. It was here that Custer county's first newspaper, the Custer County Leader, was born, on June 13, 1881, with George Trefren, publisher, and Samuel C. Beebe, editor. The Leader continued at Westerville until 1883, when Mr. Beebe moved with it to Broken Bow, where the county seat had been located the fall previous. The Westerville Times was started at Westerville in 1883 by C. H. Dalrymple. It was moved after a few months to Nonpareil, a town in the northern part of the state. The third paper to be published at Westerville was the Westerville Echo, which was started in 1884 by a young Englishman named Knox, but soon becoming tired of journalism, he disposed of the Echo to James Westervelt, who put his son, Eugene, in charge. In 1886, on the occasion of the building of the B. & M. railroad up the Muddy valley, the village of Ansley was platted and established by the railroad company, the Echo being one of the institutions moved to the new town, where Eugene Westervelt had full charge of it.

Broken Bow—The first paper published in Broken Bow was the Custer County Leader, which was moved from Westerville in 1883 by S. C. Beebe. Mr. Beebe was its editor until 1888, when he was appointed postmaster at Broken Bow by President Harrison, which caused him to dispose of the paper to the Central Nebraska Bank October 26th of that year. It was then published for a short time by J. H. Inman and R. H. Miller, after which it was leased to Jake Horn of Callaway and W. O. Chapman of Ansley. In the course of a year or two the paper again came under the management of Mr. Inman. It was then leased to Fred Shaffer, who is now publishing a paper in Colorado. The frequent changes of management went against the Leader, and under Mr. Shaffer's administration it was suspended and the material sold in 1891. The second paper established in the county was the Custer County Republican, at Broken Bow, June 29, 1882, by R. H. Miller, who had been publishing a paper at Wood River, in Hall county. The plant was freighted across the country, a distance of nearly 100 miles, to Broken Bow. The village of Broken Bow had just been platted. For lack of lumber or railroad facilities, and owing to the great distance from any point where lumber could be procured, the first office of the Republican was built of sod, on the corner now occupied by the Broken Bow State Bank, northwest of the public square, the building furnishing quarters for the paper and also for Mr. Miller and his family. The Republican continued under Mr. Miller's management and control until March 3, 1887. While the county seat had been located at Custer, or Young's ranch, near the mouth of Spring creek, on the South Loup, it was, in fact, wherever the county clerk happened to live. At the election the county seat was relocated at Broken Bow and the following spring the Leader was moved to that city by Mr. Beebe. In March, 1887, the Republican was purchased by D. M. Amsberry, who continued it in the sod building until July of the same year, when it was moved to new quarters, the center room of the Custer block, which was built by Mr. Amsberry on lots leased from the county. For a time in the history of the Republican it was owned by a stock company and its equipment enlarged by the purchase of type and machinery that had been used by the Broken Bow Times. The stock was finally all purchased by Mr. Amsberry, the present owner. The third paper published in Broken Bow was the Broken Bow Times, established in 1885 by G. W. Trefren and S. I. Meseraull. Financially, the Times was for a short period a great success, as land notices were plentiful. But owing to some misunderstanding between the proprietors of the Times and Mr. Higgins, register of the land office at Grand Island, where most of the land notices came from, the latter induced R. E. Martin, an ex-Confederate soldier and forcible writer, to establish another paper at Broken Bow. The paper was launched in March, 1886, by R. E. Martin and J. S. Dillinger, and was christened the Statesman. To it Mr. Higgins transferred his land office patronage and the Statesman prospered immensely. It established a branch paper at Mason City, named the Mason City Transcript. The Times, not to be outdone, started a daily edition and christened it the Broken Bow Daily Times. Messrs. Martin and Dillinger disposed of the Mason City Transcript to James Whittaker, and two or three weeks later Mr. Whittaker



sold it to M. C. Warrington, who is still its owner and publisher. Martin & Dellinger dissolved partnership, Martin retaining the Statesman, while Dellinger & Walters established the sixth paper for Broken Bow, known as the Broken Bow World. The Daily Times and the Daily World were soon consolidated, Mr. Walters becoming editor-in-chief and the mechanical work being done in the Times office. In 1888 Trefren & Meseraull disposed of the Times to R. E. Martin and about the same time the World suspended. R. H. Miller then started the Daily Reporter, and had the mechanical work done at the Republican office. In the course of three months the Reporter suspended and was succeeded by the Daily Republican, published by D. M. Amsberry in connection with his weekly edition. The Daily Republican was continued until October, 1895, when the plant was leased to J. H. Chapman for one year and the daily edition discontinued. In the fall of 1888 E. M. Webb and George S. Tappan established the Nebraska Citizen in Broken Bow. The paper continued until the following spring, when its publication was suspended. It was largely due to this paper that the Alliance or People's Independent ticket was elected in the fall of 1889. A few of the leaders of the Alliance resurrected the Citizen and established the Alliance Motor and installed A. J. Evans of Thedford as editor. The Motor was not a financial success and soon suspended. In April, 1890, the Motor material was gotten together, C. W. Beal, president of the Farmer's Alliance, installed as president and manager. The paper was called the Custer County Beacon. In 1890 E. M. Webb became associated with Mr. Beal in the publication of this paper, which was soon recognized as the leading Populist paper of central Nebraska. In the course of three years E. L. Beal of Ansley was induced to leave his farm and join his brother, C. W., in promoting the Alliance doctrine. The Beal brothers eventually purchased the stock of the other members of the company, and are now sole proprietors of the plant. Except during the year 1898, when C. W. Beal served one term in the state Senate, the two brothers have done all the editorial and mechanical work of the office since 1893. In 1898 F. A. Amsberry of Mason City was employed as assistant editor. In April, 1882, the Custer County Chief was established by W. G. and E. R. Purcell under the firm name of Purcell Bros., which they published in connection with their job office. Both the Beacon and the Chief have a liberal share of the advertising patronage of the business men of Broken Bow and both are doing a prosperous business. In 1893 W. H. Predmore and E. M. Webb started the Custer County Citizen, which was run during the campaign in opposition to some of the Populist candidates. After a few weeks Mr. Webb returned to his claim near Callaway, and Mr. Predmore continued the paper for some time and then leased it to Mrs. Louisa Raymond, who ran it for a short time in connection with the job printing business. A Mr. Cook succeeded Mrs. Raymond, who continued the paper for some months longer, when it was discontinued in 1894. For a time Rev. George Bailey, pastor of the Presbyterian church from 1893 to 1899, published a church paper in connection with his work, as also did Rev. Epley, pastor of the U. B. church. The Populist, a paper started in opposition to fusion, was published in Broken

Bow from September 1, 1900, to February, 1901, by James Stockham and J. G. Painter.

Ansley—Ansley's first paper was the *Echo*, which was moved to that place from Westerville in 1886 by Eugene Westervelt. In April, 1887, the paper was sold to J. H. and W. O. Chapman, two practical young newspaper men who came from Cambridge, Illinois. The name of the paper was changed to the *Ansley Chronicle*, and it was published by the Chapmans until 1895, when it passed into the hands of Tom Wright, a young Scotchman then but eighteen years of age, who is the present publisher. The *Chronicle* is a live and prosperous paper. Two other papers have sprung up in Ansley since the *Chronicle* was established, but both have passed into history. The *Ansley Argus* was the *Chronicle's* first rival, and was started in 1886 or 1887 by C. H. Hargrove. It lived only a few months. The *Ansley Advocate* was first published at Ansley in 1896 by J. M. Amsberry, who, previous to that time, had published the paper at Mason City. In the fall of 1900 Mr. Amsberry disposed of the paper to W. F. Greenlee, an inexperienced man in the newspaper business, under whose management it was suspended in March, 1901, the type and other equipments being shipped to York, where they are used in a job office.

Algernon—Upon the advent of the B. & M. railroad up the Muddy valley, in 1886, the *Champion* was started at Algernon, by a Mr. Watkins, who, after the village failed to secure a depot, removed the paper to Mason City and changed its name to the *Mason City Advocate*. He disposed of the plant to J. M. Amsberry, who continued it until 1895, when he suspended it for a year, subsequently resuming its publication at Ansley under the name of the *People's Advocate*.

Berwyn—For a few months in 1890-1 the village of Berwyn sported a newspaper called the *Berwyn Times*. It was published by Dr. Nickerson and died a natural death after a short and not brilliant career.

Mason City—The *Mason City Transcript* was established in 1886 by Martin & Dellinger, proprietors of the *Broken Bow Statesman*, who sold it to James Whittaker. A few weeks later Mr. Whittaker sold it to M. C. Warrington, who is still its editor and publisher. The *Algernon Champion* was moved from Algernon to Mason City some time in 1886, and the name changed to the *Mason City Advocate*. It was purchased from its original owner, Mr. Watkins, by J. M. Amsberry, who continued its publication at Mason City until 1895, and in 1896 moved it to Ansley.

Sargent—The *Loup Valley Eagle* was the first publication to herald the rise and growth of the village of Sargent. It was established by E. P. Savage, owner of the townsite, and was edited by C. D. Kelly. The *Eagle* was succeeded by the *Sargent Times*, owned by F. M. Currie and edited by J. E. McCray. The paper was discontinued in 1894, and the material sold to the *Grip*, of Alliance. From that time until 1897, Sargent was without a newspaper. In the latter year J. C. L. Wisely started the *Commoner*, afterwards changing the name of the paper to the *Sargent Era*, its present name. In 1900 C. S. Osborne established the *Sargent Leader*. In the course of a few months he sold it to Howard Say-

age, who shortly afterwards sold it to A. H. Barks, its present editor and proprietor.

West Union—West Union for a number of years enjoyed the luxury of a newspaper which was known as the West Union Gazette. Among the editors of this paper we recall Ham Kautzman, Jud Woods and W. H. Predmore. The Gazette was suspended during the drouth period, and since that time West Union has been newspaperless.

Comstock—This little village, the last born of Custer County's towns, has had a newspaper for about a year, called the Index. It is published by Harold Cooley, who is also publisher of the Arcadia Champion.

Merna—Merna is not without a newspaper history. In November, 1886 Purcell Bros. established the Merna Record, which was edited by E. R. Purcell. The Record flourished for a number of years. In October in his place. Subsequently the paper was moved to Callaway, and the name changed to the Custer County Independent. A. Z. Lazenby started another paper in Merna which he christened the Merna Reporter, in the latter part of 1891, but it had a short life. It was resurrected in 1893 by Capt. Gatchell and continued until the fall of 1894, when he moved it to Sheridan, Wyoming, continuing in the newspaper business there until his appointment as register of the land office in that state. In 1899 Rev. Clifton commenced the publication of the Merna Sun, which, in the spring of 1900 he sold to Theo. A. Miller, who abandoned the paper in January of the present year, and returned to his home in Omaha. Most of the material was shipped back to York, from whence it had been leased.

Dale—Dale for a very short time had a newspaper, which was started by Trefren & Meseraull in 1886, in anticipation of the railroad being built through that valley. But when they failed to realize their anticipation the plant was moved to Anselmo and named the Anselmo Sun.

Anselmo—The first issue of the Sun was from a tent and S. I. Meseraull was its editor. J. H. Zehrung, Ben Sanders and others tried their hands at making the Sun shine, with but indifferent success, until it finally fell into the hands of J. J. Tooley, present superintendent of the Custer County schools, who, in connection with teaching the Anselmo school, succeeded, with the assistance of his wife, in causing the Sun to cast weekly rays of light and glory over the people of the little village. Becoming tired of his double duty, the professor sold his interest in the paper to Al Hummel, of Gandy, in 1890, and was finally sold to E. R. Purcell, who added it to the outfit of his Merna Record.

Arnold—The first paper published in Arnold was the Tribune, established in the year 1886, by Francis Ainsworth, and which had an existence of something like a year. The Bugle Call, state organ of the Independent Order of Good Templars, was also published at Arnold for a time about 1887, but the mechanical work was not done there. Miss Anna M. Saunders was its editor and publisher. After the suspension of the Tribune Arnold was without a newspaper until February, 1888, when the News was established there by S. L. Carlyle, who continued to publish it until 1894, when he removed



the plant to Nehawka, Nebraska. Since that time Arnold has been without a newspaper.

Callaway—Callaway's first newspaper was the Standard, which made its first bow to the public August 19, 1886, the town being at that time just seven weeks old. The Standard was a newsy paper published and edited by C. A. Sherwood. The Standard grew and prospered with the town until it was sold by Mr. Sherwood to S. L. Carlyle in ——. Mr. Carlyle continued its publication until —— when he removed the plant to Arnold and established the News. In the fall of 1887 J. Woods Smith, head of the Callaway townsite syndicate, purchased a newspaper outfit and on October 15th of that year established the Callaway Headlight, with O. H. Barber as editor and F. W. Conly as manager. The paper was named the "Headlight" in anticipation of the early completion of the railroad. The paper was purchased on February 24, 1888, by H. M. Baley, and on October 20th following by F. W. Conly, who sold it to the Independent April 30, 1892. Shortly after the beginning of the People's Independent party movement, the political managers of that organization concluded that they needed a newspaper to spread their gospel at Callaway, and E. M. Webb was sent over from Merna with the old Merna Record outfit and the Custer County Independent was founded, and for several years the Independent enjoyed a good patronage. In the fall of 1896 E. M. Webb elected a member of the Nebraska Legislature, and in 1898 retired from the newspaper business, being succeeded by W. A. Overman, who conducted the Independent until 1901, when the paper was discontinued. Shortly after selling the Headlight, F. W. Conly established the Weekly Tribune, on July 2, 1892, which he has continuously published since that date with the exception of fifteen months, during which it was consolidated with the Independent.

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## Lillian Township.

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E. N. Bishop.

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In 1875 James L. Oxford made the first settlement in what is now Lillian township. He built log buildings and established a ranch on the east bank of Lillian Creek, near where his frame buildings now stand. His father-in-law, John Henderson, and family, came from Missouri and settled near him in 1878, until the spring of 1879, when the level and fertile plains became so attractive to those seeking homes that they began to wend their way up the south side of the Middle Loup river. During this season Perry Lyle, J. E. Ash, J. C. Hunter, J. M. Ash, S. Gates, with their families, and David McGuigan, A. C. Ash and Ervin Ash, old bachelors, settled on the river bot-



tom and J. O. Taylor, Ole Johnson, N. K. Lee, S. K. Lee, John Lee and Nelson T. Lee, with their families, settled in Round valley. As if by magic the sod houses arose one by one, and dotted the valley and plain in every direction. In the spring of 1880, Jesse Gandy started a ranch at the place afterwards known as the Hartley ranch, and the following-named settlers, with their families, if they had any, and with good digestive organs, if they were bachelors, made their appearance on the scene of action and became permanent residents, or homesteaders as they were then called to distinguish them from the ranchmen: Thomas Lampman, Frank Luse, E. N. Bishop, Frank Doty, Hugh M. Goheen, John Goheen, J. M. Goheen, Austin Goheen, James McGraw, D. O. Luse, Jarvis Kimes, A. W. Squires, O. S. Woodward, Charles Griffiths, J. E. Gwinn, William Gwinn, J. N. Peale, A. N. Peale and Samuel Oxford. The winter of 1880-1 was what has been since known as the "hard winter." To convey some idea of the difficulty of traveling where a track was not broken out I will endeavor to give a short description of a trip I made one day of but two miles and back, which took me from early in the morning until after dark. The layers of sleet cut the horses' legs so that instead of wading through the snow they would jump up on it, as if climbing on top of ice, which kept breaking and letting them through. In a few minutes they were so exhausted that I had to stop and let them rest. Their legs were cut and bleeding so badly that they left a crimson trail behind them in the snow. To make matters worse the grass was very short and entirely covered by snow, so that one could not tell what was under the drift ahead. The first thing I knew the horses dropped down into a draw about five feet deep, where they floundered about, unable to get out. I went to work with a scoop shovel I had brought with me, and by noon had the team out on the level ground. Although it was dinner time and I was somewhat hungry, yet I had no dinner to eat, as I was on my way with a sack each of wheat and corn to be ground in a feed grinder that was owned by one of our neighbors, T. J. Butcher, where I arrived about four o'clock, having had to dig my horses out of draws four times on the way. It took but a few minutes to grind my feed and as I had broken the road on my way over pretty thoroughly, the return trip was made with comparative ease and without incident.

During this winter S. Gates and the writer circulated a petition for the formation of Lillian precinct, this territory at that time being a part of Victoria precinct with the voting place at New Helena. As some of the citizens had to go twenty-four miles to vote, the county commissioners readily granted our request and established Lillian precinct with nearly the same territory as the present township of Lillian embraces. From this time forth public improvements were made as fast as the financial condition of the county would permit. Among these were three bridges across the Middle Loup river on the northern boundary of Lillian precinct.

Early in the spring of 1880 a preacher from Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, named Stephenson, took the claim now owned by Robert Ross and commenced preaching at New Helena, but as he tired of keeping "batch" he returned back east and left the people without a minister. Learning that a Pres-

byterian minister of the name of Burbank, living at Georgetown, on the South Loup, could be procured to preach once a month, the people of all denominations interested sent for him. He came, organized a Presbyterian church and preached about two years, or until the Methodists made arrangements to start a class which included this appointment, on the Westerville circuit, with preaching every two weeks. Some years later, I have forgotten the date, a preacher of the name of Ross, living in Indiana, offered to come to Broken Bow if the church there would pay his fare to Grand Island. As Broken Bow was not able to support a preacher at that time the class at Gates united with them and helped to pay the passage of the Indiana preacher to Grand Island. He came, reorganized the class and preached in the old sod school house, near where the Gates school house stands at this time. Since that time this church has always maintained an organization and Sunday-school, even keeping a minister during all the years of drought. About 1888 the Christian church organized a society at the White Pigeon school house, and have maintained it ever since, as have also the Free Methodists at the Oxford school house and the Lutherans at Round Valley. In the fall of 1880 A. N. Peale taught a three-months' school in district No. 13, now generally known as the Oxford district. As this was the first and only school within fourteen miles the children either went to it or went a-fishing. During the first few years of our settlement the ranchmen and new settlers consumed everything the farmers could raise, but when farming became more general and on a larger scale, and new settlers ceased to come in so fast, the farmers commenced to raise hogs to consume their produce; consequently when the fall of 1890 came the country was just full of them. Having no corn to feed them, some of the farmers sold their stock hogs to eastern feeders, some knocked them in the head, while others let them stand around and squeal.

On February 16, 1880, Eri postoffice was established at the residence of J. E. Ash, with his wife, Alice Ash, as postmistress. It was named Eri, after Mr. Ash's brother, and was located on section 14, township 19, range 20. It was on the route to New Helena, and connected with the Kearney and New Helena mail at the latter point. The mail was carried twice a week, by way of Westerville and Round Valley, the latter office being established some time in 1880. Mrs. Ash resigned in favor of Frank Doty and recommended the removal of the office to his residence, three miles distant, which appeared to meet the approval of the authorities at Washington. The office was removed and remained there until it was discontinued when the Walworth postoffice was removed to the bridge by W. H. Predmore in 1885. Mr. Gates sent in a petition for the establishment of Gates postoffice, with himself as postmaster, which was granted, and the first mail was delivered there July 4, 1884. Soon after this Mr. Gates put in a small stock of groceries, which was the beginning of the first store in this vicinity. The following year he built another room on his sod house, enlarged his stock of groceries, added hardware and dry goods, and in 1886 built a good frame store building. For several years, during the prosperous seasons he kept a good store and did quite an extensive business. But in 1893 it had all evaporated except the postoffice. But like everything else, also, in this western country, it could not be stopped

entirely. Another small store was started by Joseph Beckwith, the new postmaster, who in about two years sold out to S. M. Hinkle. Mr. Hinkle kept the store and postoffice about a year and then sold out to Peter Fackley. When the railroad was built to Ord, the mail route was changed and came from there to New Helena instead of from Loup City, and ran tri-weekly until the B. & M. railroad was built through Anselmo, when the route was changed and ran from Anselmo to Sargent, daily, via New Helena, Lillian, Gates, Walworth and West Union, giving to all this section, as at present, a mail service that it may well be proud of, especially since the railroad was completed to Sargent last fall.

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## Lillian Precinct.

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D. H. Gwinn.

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Every citizen in Custer county is familiar with the general features of the table lands of the Loup forks of the Platte, and the little valleys and parks or depressions in them generally approaching the circular in form, and surrounded by hills from fifty to an hundred feet in height. Such is the location of Lillian Park, in township 19, range 20 west of the 6th principal meridian. Its greatest length is about three and one-half miles, with a width of about two and one-half miles. It contains in all about 4,000 acres. This valley has a physical peculiarity which marks it as an exception to the general plan upon which the surrounding country is formed, mainly that unlike other depressions, canons and valleys, it has no drainage outlet, but is surrounded entirely by hills and terminates at the western extremity in a lagoon which becomes in times of floods a considerable reservoir. Water is obtainable here at depth of from seventy-five to 100 feet, and is superior of quality.

The soil is a rich black loam, from two to four feet deep, with the productive qualities peculiar to Custer county soil. The sub-soil is an immense bed of light-colored or whitish clay, 30 to 60 feet deep, and is strongly impregnated with lime, doubtless decayed marine shells, many of which can still be seen in various stages of decomposition. This fine-grained sub-soil acts as a perfect regulator to the surface against extremes of drouth or too much rainfall, and the wonderful capabilities of the soil to produce large yields in drouths has been fully demonstrated in the past three years.

Probably the first men who ever looked upon this valley with a serious idea of possession were J. M. and H. A. Goheen and Wm. H. Gwinn. The located their claims, made a "dug-out" and cut some hay, and prepared for winter.

Some time during that fall John W. Goheen, a brother of the first arrivals, came with their parents, quite old people, who had been pioneers in the



settlement of western Pennsylvania. The aged couple, full of the fire of youth, were delighted with the new found earthly paradise and soon filed on a homestead, which they occupied until the death of the aged James Goheen, which occurred in August, 1887.

The greatest obstacle to the settlement of these table lands as yet, was the great depth to fine water. Many of the first settlers along the streams had seen and admired this valley, but they did not dare venture too far from the running water. The Goheen boys were fortunate enough to secure the services of two settlers north of the Middle Loup river, Charles Bishop and Burton Gates, who owned a rig for putting down tubular wells. They were successful in obtaining a bountiful supply of good water at a depth of 80 to 100 feet, piercing a soft manganese rock and finding water in gravel just beneath:

During the summer of 1881 the Goheen boys built comfortable sod houses preparatory to moving their families to their new homes.

The next settler to make his appearance was J. E. Gwinn. Wm. Gwinn had returned to Nebraska county to remove his cattle to the rich grazing grounds of the west, and uniting their little herds these two, accompanied by the writer, on his tenderfoot exploring expedition, started April 17, 1882, with forty head of cattle, and emigrant wagon and a herd of ponies. We were twenty-two days making the journey.

Some idea of the seclusion of this valley at this time may be gained from the fact that while J. E. Gwinn was engaged in breaking fifty acres on his claim in the summer of 1882 he saw only two travelers and one of these had lost his way.

In October, 1882, came J. O. Bates with his son, J. M., and daughter, Susie, all prospecting for land that they found to their liking adjoining the new settlement. J. M. Bates the next spring removed from Omaha with all his effects, to his future home. A. G. Page and wife, also from Vermont, people and parents of J. M. Bates' wife arrived with the Bates family, and settled in Sec. 19. Mr. Bates provided himself with a large tent, sufficient to shelter the whole party. On their arrival it was pitched on the claim of Susie Bates and became the temporary home of the party while more permanent buildings were being erected on their respective claims. All went merrily enough in their Arab-like mode of existence until the latter part of May, when one day there came the most furious rain and wind storm ever yet seen in this locality, and when at its height the tent was lifted from over their heads and left them to the mercy of the raging elements. Bedding, pans of milk, wearing apparel, and sundry other unmentionables, suddenly sought wonderful affinity for each other, and uniting, attempted to form a new compound. Bedrenched, bedraggled and almost drowned, the occupants thus suddenly rendered homeless, dodged and cowered, and grasped at straws in the way of shelter until the brief deluge was over. Then with more haste than grace, they sought shelter, bag and baggage, in the bachelor quarters of Wm. Guinn, a single room about 10x12 feet. One end of the room was devoted to a range of trunks, boxes and bedding from the ceiling to the floor, a stove in one corner, a table and some chairs, and where, oh where, did the eleven animated beings find a resting place for their wet feet? Reader, you must picture the inter-family



dinner according to your imagination. As for sleeping arrangements, they consisted of the airy apartments on wheels, in which the men folks sought nightly repose.

C. E. Bates, a young son, reached his majority some time later, and filed on a preemption in 27.

Two young Englishmen, E. E. Bird and Arthur Clark, built their sod houses in the autumn of 1882. Clark soon tired of homesteading and returned to England. Bird also sold his claim and removed to another part of the neighborhood a few miles distant. The purchaser of the claim was T. A. Leisure, who resides there still, and if Clark were to return he would hardly recognize the farm which had taken the place of the raw prairie which he bartered away.

Clark had a tree claim also which was purchased from Jabez Bowman from Cass county, Nebraska, and Bird had one which was bought by A. G. Bowman, Jabez's father. Clark received a horse for this quarter, and it is now valued at \$1,300. Chas. Bowman purchased E. E. Bird's homestead and converted it into a fine farm.

Some of the settlers who did not prove to be permanent ones were Chas. and Amos Meeker, David Daniels and E. B. Bartlett. During 1884 came also Joseph Pickner.

Thos. Maupin, a worthy old gentleman from Iowa, came with his family the same spring and filed his statement on a part of sections 27 and 34. A great event had happened on the western extremity of the little settlement while we were thus watching the progress in the eastern part.

In the spring of 1883 F. M. DuPray and wife made their appearance with a large family of grown up daughters. It seemed like the advent of full civilization to the wilds of Lillian Park. Lonely bachelors hung up their flap-jack pans, scraped the dough from their pantaloons and hastened to see if Mr. DuPray was, as reputed, a blacksmith, and to consult him about breaking plows, other farming implements, etc., etc. The result was that several of the bachelors were made happy and several new homes were founded instead of the mere staying places, as formerly. Among these were H. A. Goheen, on 31 and Fred Frances on 30, where he begun the task of redeeming 160 acres of land from the power of the Great American desert.

Joseph Chrisman, the patriarch of another large family of sons and daughters, and Abraham-like, a keeper of a large herd of cattle, with complete Gypsy outfit, begun in the spring of 1883 a gradual progress towards the "Loup country" from Nemaha county. He found a large, fine stock location about the head waters of Lillian Creek, section 3—18—20. It is not likely that he or his family will ever forget the trials of their first winter here, a severe one, and being inexperienced in the usages of Custer county blizzards, the shelter and feed provided for their stock were insufficient and many head perished, though since then prosperity has smeared itself all over the old pioneer in great dabs, and a large increase has blessed his efforts.

Mary E. Howard, a widow lady, with her daughter, settled in section 32, and bravely went to work to make a home. She has succeeded in bringing thirty acres under cultivation, mostly her own labor.

Rasmus Schritsmier located in 31 during 1884, and begun industriously to conquer the prairie sod and fit the soil for crops.

A school district was organized in 1884 with a population sufficient to insure a six-months school yearly.

In 1888 a small church organization was effected, of which Rev. Baskerville of Broken Bow was pastor. With a Sunday-school in connection this furnishes a means of grace to the settlers.

During the year 1884 Uncle Sam, not unmindful of his far-away subjects, established a postoffice at the residence of H. M. Goheen, and that gentleman was called "Nasby."

After a few months he resigned in favor of J. O. Bates, who is the present incumbent.

The mail service, which was at first twice a week is now daily.

And so, being devoutly mindful that the God of the universe has smiled upon our efforts to replenish the earth and subdue it, and trusting His benison will follow us still.

We come to the parting words to our readers, wishing them success in their efforts to gain a home and country here—in the end a better country, whose Maker and Builder has prepared for us on that other bright shore, and in Him let us trust.

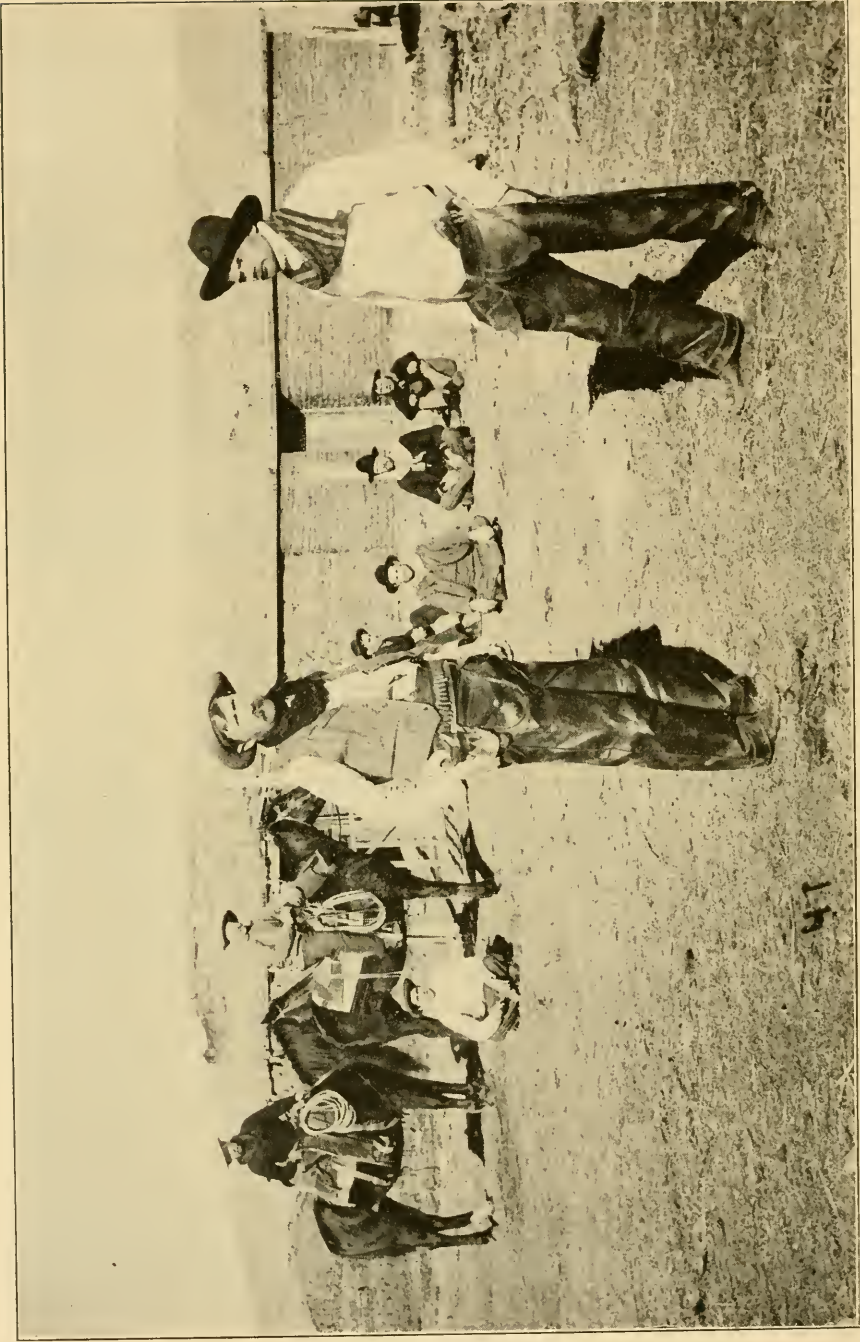
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## Hogs on the Ranch.

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Early in the '80s the pioneers on the Middle Loup put in most of their time in winter hauling wood from the canons and getting out cedar for posts. They also went on the islands in the the river and cut white willow for making corrals. There was a fine willow island about ten miles above the settlement, near the Rankin ranch, which the ranch people rather laid claim to, but for all this the settlers hauled a great portion of it away, especially a German, whom we will call Hans would go up and get his load, pull to the ranch for supper and lodging and breakfast. Of course, no charges were made by Mr. Rankin for such trifles.

It finally became an old story. One night Hans came as usual and it happened on this particular night Billie Erickson, better known among the cow-boys as "Bill America," Charles Austin and Wright Rankin were at the ranch, and all you have to do after twenty years have elapsed to get a hearty laugh out of the boys is to say "Hogs in the ranch." It seems it was a put up job to have some fun at Hans' expense. Rankin was to play crazy, and after supper the boys very confidentially told Hans Rankin was crazy, and no difference what he done he mustn't make him mad. Presently Rankin took a fit, chewing soap to make foam run out of his mouth, grabbed Hans and danced him all over the room until he almost wore the poor man out. There was a red-hot cook-stove in the room and Rankin in his grand right and left



Arkansas Bob and Bill America, two well known Cowboys.



would try to force Hans on top of the stove, which he avoided by nimbly jumping over it, taking the whole thing as a huge joke rather than get the crazy man mad. Finally they unrolled their beds on the floor, and Austin and Rankin occupied one bed, while Bill and Hans took the other. In a little while Rankin took another fit and declared there were hogs in the ranch. "Listen, Charlie; can't you hear 'em breathe?" "No, Wright," responds Austin, "that's Hans and Billie." "But I say it is not and I am going to kill one and we will have some meat. Hand me my Winchester, easy, so as not to scare 'em."

Charlie tries to reason with him, while poor Hans is scared till he daren't hardly move. At last Rankin makes a grab for his Winchester, while Charlie shouts to warn the boys to look out, Rankin has his gun. Bang! Bang! goes the gun, shooting just over their heads. Billie jumps up and yells like a Sioux and he and Charlie grapple with Rankin to get the gun, while Hans fairly splits the wind to get out at the door. The boys finally get Rankin back to bed and succeed in convincing him there is no hogs in the ranch. It is a bitter cold night and Hans did not stop in his flight to even secure his clothes, after awhile he knocked timidly on the door, when Rankin jumped up and wanted to know who was there? "It's Hans." Why, sure enough, Hans, it is you; come right in; have you fed your horses? Of course, you haven't had any supper; the coffee is warm yet, and I will have you a bite in a jiffy." "Oh, no; Mr. Rankin," replied Hans, his teeth chattering with cold; "I will just go to bed."

After awhile Rankin imagines there are hogs in the ranch—Bang! Bang! Bang! goes the old Winchester in that direction. Another scuffle with Rankin by Billie and Austin to get his gun, while poor Hans darts out into the chilly night very thinly clad, and after awhile manages to slip in without disturbing the crazy man who sleeps quietly till morning. While Hans is out next morning caring for his team, Charles Austin bored a hole about six inches above Hans' pillow, blackening it so it would appear like a fresh bullet hole, and to this day Hans thinks his life was only spared by a miracle.

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## Arkansas Bob in the Well.

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"Arkansas Bob" and Bill "America" were at Valentine on a lark, both well loaded, and were in the dance hall, enjoying a good fire, as it was pretty cold; finally Bob dropped off to sleep and was snoring away at a great rate. This attracted the attention of the floor manager who said: "Bill, you must get this man out of here." "Certainly, Certainly," hiccoughed Bill, rousing himself from a doze. The floor manager shook Bob and lifted him onto his feet by main force, and half carried and half dragged him to the door. Bill having pulled himself up by Bob pretended to be helping to get Bob out but in reality holding on to steady himself so he could walk. When the door



was reached he opened it and they were pushed out on the narrow platform, which was only about six feet square. The door shut and they were forgotten. They stood there holding on to each other, waiting for the stairs to come around so they could descend to the ground, which was about twenty feet below. They looked at the stars but they, too, seemed to be going faster than the stair steps. "Now, Bill; when she comes round agin let 'er go." "All right, Bob; here ye are," and the two drunken men take a header, locked in each other's arms and bumpy thump they go end over end and roll out in the middle of the street before they stopped, with the breath entirely knocked out of them. They finally came to their senses somewhat sobered by their jolting and start out to find some place to get in out of the cold. They lose their way in the darkness and wander out over the prairie, as Valentine was not very large at this early day. At last Bob shoots downward like a rocket out of sight, leaving Bill utterly dazed. He stands perfectly still trying to realize what has happened; at last he regains his voice and shouts: "Where are you at, Bob?" "Down hyar, Bill, I've fell in a well, but for heaven's sake keep back, or yer goin' to fall on top of me." Bob, by this last fall, was thoroughly sobered, and fully realized the danger of having a drunken man fall about fifteen feet on top of him, and Bill was just drunk enough to have some fun by playing on Bob's fear. So getting down on his hands and knees he crawled to the edge of the old well, then put his feet over into the well, sat there swaying to and fro, like he was just going to fall in, and there was just enough light so Bob could see the swaying body and was almost paralyzed with fright. After cursing Bill for awhile to no effect, he pleaded with him as an old friend to go for help. Bill started and got a few rods away, when Bob breathed a sigh of relief. Just then he could hear Bill pitching along in the dark coming back, and in another instant Bill was standing on the very brink peering down, and in a thick voice said: "Say Bob; will you stay there till I get back?" "Of course I will, you fool!" Then changing his tone: "Say, Bill; if you are my friend go for help, and don't get so near the edge or you will fall in." "All right, Bob, but I want you to agree to stay here till I get back." "Yes, yes, Bill; I'll agree to anything."

Bill meanders off down town and strikes Charlie Sherman, who is drunk as a lord. Charlie has a bottle and the pair wander around till daylight, when they come to themselves. They are out south of Valentine, coming in locked arms, Charlie carrying his shoes in his hands. Bill all at once recollects Bob had fallen into a well somewhere and he went for help. A search was instituted and some one at last remembered of an old dry well out by the graveyard, and sure enough, Bob was found waiting just as he promised.



## Settlement of Georgetown.

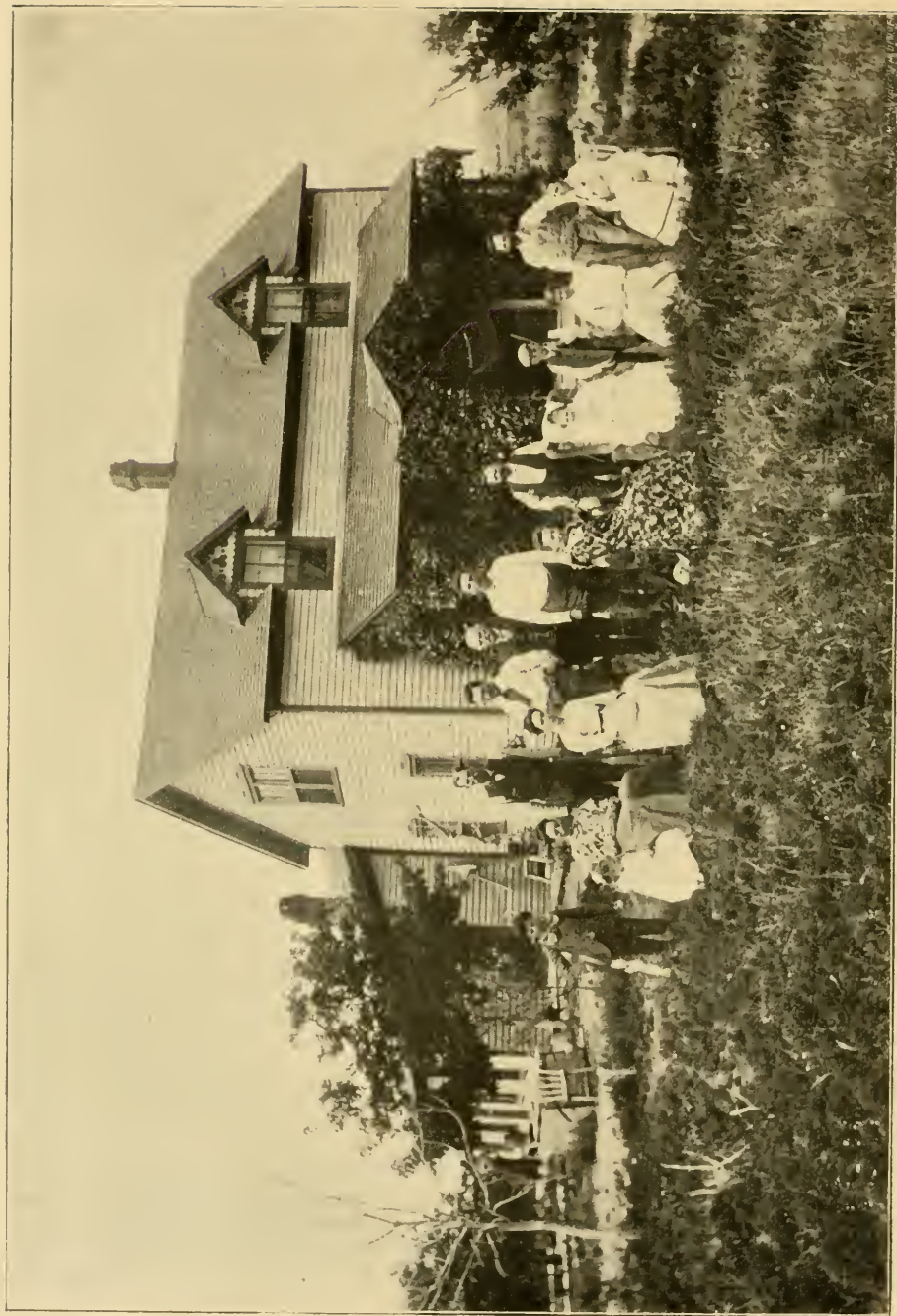
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W. A. George.

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In June, 1872, the writer, then a boy of eleven summers, with his father, mother, brother and four sisters, bade adieu to his New England home and friends near the old witch town of Salem, Massachusetts, and started westward by rail. Our destination was Nebraska. We boys, of course, had to shrink considerably in size and age whenever the conductor came around, in order that we might get through on half fare tickets, but it may be remarked right here that we took full rations whenever the grub basket was passed around. At Omaha we saw our first Indians, robed in their red blankets, as they sold their trinkets alongside the train and through the car windows. We arrived at Gibbon, our destination, tired and hungry, and being turned loose on a box of sweet crackers, I ate so many of them that I have never had any appetite for that form of bread since. Gibbon was at that time an ideal western town, being the county seat of Buffalo county and surrounded by as fine land for homesteaders as the most exacting could wish. The sound of the hammer was heard from early morning until late at night. Many people were living in box cars and tents until they could erect something to call a home.

I made my first trip to Custer county in 1875. We had some horses stolen and my father thought he had a clue to their whereabouts. He and I started to hunt them up. We traveled about fifteen miles to the north the first day and stayed all night with a settler, whom my father hired to go with us the next day as a guide. We struck the South Loup river about where Pleasanton now stands. From there we worked up the river for several miles, seeing but one house until we arrived at the old Streeter ranch. Near this place we met a cowboy with a fine deer strung across his saddle, and a little further along another cowboy who was carrying a saddle on his shoulder. He told us that his horse had fallen and broken one of its legs and that he was obliged to shoot it and return to camp on foot. The next place we struck was a very small dugout belonging to an old trapper by the name of Jeff Hooley. There was nobody at home, but a card on the door bore this inscription: "Help yourself, but for God's sake shut the door." The "shut the door" part was in a good deal bigger letters than the rest of the sentence. We had not yet been educated up to the point of walking into a man's house during his absence and helping ourselves, so did not accept the kind invitation. But we dug about a dozen potatoes out of a patch near the dugout, put them in the buggy and drove on. We wanted to get to some settlement where we could spend the night, our guide assuring us that we would come to one not very far ahead. We traveled as long as we possibly could, it being very dark, and



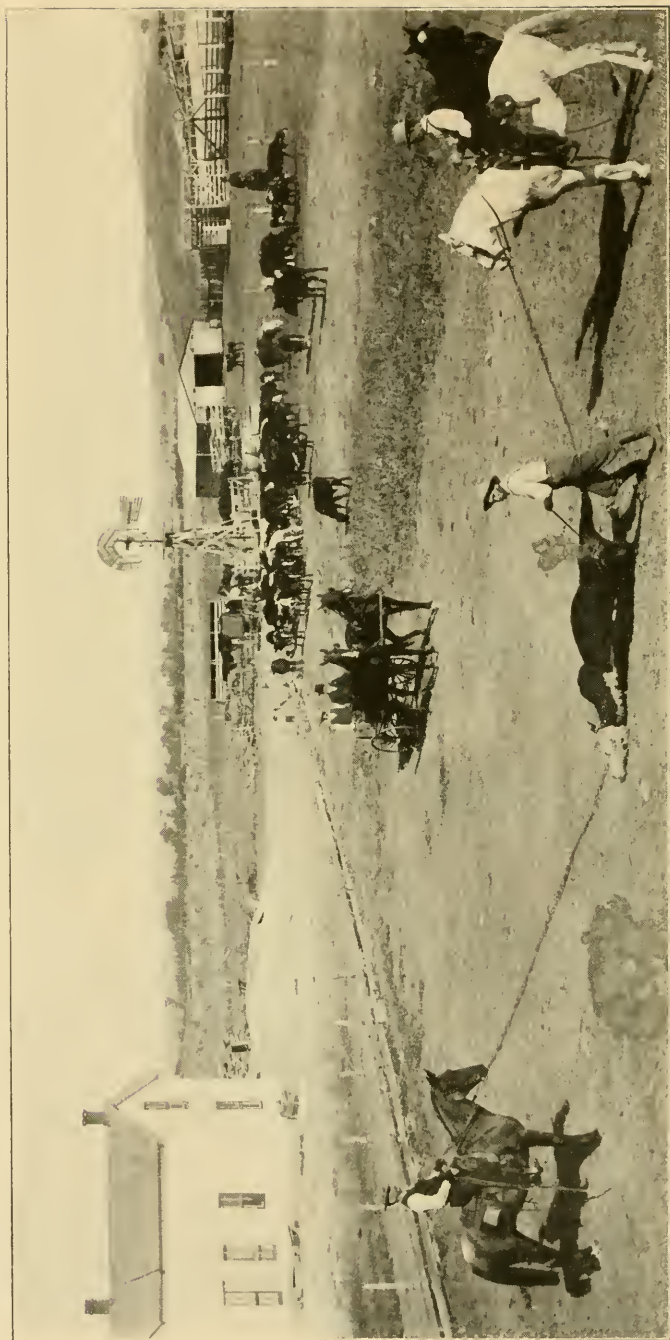
Residence of Walt George, one of the most successful cattlemen on the South Loup, who is now interested with Mr. S. McConnell in building a flouring mill at Georgetown.



still no sign of any house could we discover. All at once our horse came to a sudden stop and could not be urged to go a step further. My father got out of the buggy to investigate and found that we were on the brink of a deep gulch or canon, with a camp-fire burning away down below. We thought of Indians, of course, and wondered how we were to get across, as the bank was almost perpendicular and appeared to be at least seventy-five feet high. We unhitched the horse, and by looking around a little found a place where we could descend, and were soon beside the camp fire, which consisted of a few dying embers, but with no signs of any human being about. We were considerably scared, not knowing but that a band of Indians might be lurking about somewhere in the darkness ready to spring out upon us. But we were there and must make the best of it; so we got our potatoes and proceeded down the gulch about two hundred feet to a big cottonwood tree which was hollow at the butt. We built a fire in the butt of this tree and baked our potatoes, which, being the only food we had, comprised our supper. We sat on the ground all night with our guns at hand. Just about nightfall we had passed a place called Death creek, so named from the massacre of two Buffalo county boys and another man, at that place about a year before. The Buffalo county men who were murdered were Dr. Cutterback and a harness maker's son by the name of Leak, from Gibbon. The three were out trapping and were surprised and killed by a band of Indians. With this circumstance on our minds we put in a terrible night, and were not sorry when daylight came again. Our guide returned home in the morning and I wanted to do the same, but my father would not hear to it. We traveled most of that day without seeing a human habitation, but finally arrived at Woods and Kilgore's ranch about half past two in the afternoon. Having eaten nothing but our dozen potatoes and a small lunch since four o'clock in the morning of the previous day, it goes without saying that we had a good, healthy appetite which Mr. Kilgore proceeded to appease by mixing up a big milk pan full of batter and turning it into pancakes as fast as he could bake them. We found one of our horses at this place and were informed that the other had been run off into the hills near Wood river. I started early in the morning on my return trip of seventy miles over the trail, rushing into the arms of my dear old mother at ten o'clock that same night. And she never seemed dearer to me before or since. Two days later my father returned with the other horse. My next trip to Custer county was after posts to Cedar canon, and with six others made the trip in the month of April. My father was greatly pleased with my success, and these posts may still be seen on our old homestead near Gibbon. In 1878 my sister moved into Custer county, locating where Berwyn now stands, and my mother became uneasy and sent me over to find out how they were getting along. I made this trip on horseback, found my sister's home, and found them getting along all right.

In 1887 I came into Custer county, locating permanently, and leased the ranch where I now live, which I afterwards bought from my uncle, H. W. George. It consists of 1,550 acres of deeded land and a lease of 640 acres of school land, located on the South Loup river in Loup township. In 1888 I bought out a small store that had been started on the ranch by a firm named





x. S. McConnell's Cattle Ranch at Georgetown.

Sterk & Means. In 1893 we sold out the store and engaged in ranching exclusively. We have added to the place until it comprises over 4000 acres of deeded land and one school section of leased land. We have over forty miles of fence and our live stock at this time consists of three hundred cattle, two hundred and fifty hogs and seventy-five horses, with wagons, buggies, tools and farm machinery sufficient to carry on the place. We have the Baptist church on the east, the Presbyterian on the west, the Christian on the north and the Methodist on the south. Our schools are laid out about three miles apart, which places all the pupils within easy access to them.

Among the old settlers of Loup township who might be mentioned as landmarks are D. and J. M. Downey, Will P. Trew, Lon Davis, Nc. George, Al. Morgan, Diah Woodruff, Phil. Campbell, J. E. Myers, Peter Beck and Josh Woods, the latter being a member of the firm of Woods & Hamer. To these may also be added Ralph and Silas Drake, Jasper Robinson and J. E. Cavenee, all old settlers and successful stock-raisers and farmers. We also have some young men who will successfully carry on the work that the older ones commenced. Space forbids mention of them all, but I must speak of S. S. McConnell, who has resided among us but three years. In 1898 he formed a partnership with Matt Stuckey, and leased what is known as the Stuckey ranch. He had very little money, but plenty of grit and vitality. In 1899 his partner died and Mr. McConnell leased the entire ranch of 5,500 acres, and is to-day the owner of four hundred and fifty cattle, one hundred hogs and thirty horses, with everything necessary to handle them to the best advantage. Mr. McConnell and the writer have recently been instrumental in organizing a stock company known as the Georgetown Roller Mill and Power Company, with a capital stock of \$8,000, owning the water power and flouring mill on the South Loup river at Georgetown, and other interests in the same locality, which are to be enlarged and improved as the country advances. This portion of the South Loup valley is now the chief stock-raising portion of Custer county. One of the finest ranches in the county, or in this part of the state for that matter, is the Black ranch owned by George Adams of Chicago. The principal crops raised are corn, wheat and oats, with alfalfa, sorghum and wild hay for rough feed.

In 1878 my uncle, John S. George, located the ranch where I now live. My uncle will be remembered by all of the old settlers as a jolly, whole-souled fellow. He is now located at Winterset, Iowa. While here he discovered upon this ranch a very peculiar cave, which has been a great mystery to people who have seen it. It is located on Deer creek, on the east bank, and up to 1892 a person could go in and look over the interior. The entrance was down under the bank about twenty feet below the top of the cave. The cave had three apartments which were connected by arches carved out of the clay soil. The room which was entered from the outside had a hole in the top large enough for a man to get his head through, from which position he could get a very good view of the surrounding country without being in much danger of being seen by any one in the vicinity, as the hole was surrounded by long grass which would hide the head of the lookout. This cave has been the subject of a great deal of conjecture as to its origin and use, and the mystery

surrounding it will probably never be revealed. It was certainly the work of human hands, and it has always been my impression that it was a hiding place for robbers and cattle thieves during the very earliest days of the cattle men of the country. They are on the south side of the Loup river about half a mile from the bank. During the first years of our residence here we thought but little of these caves, there being so many new and strange things to engage the attention, but as time goes on they have become of more interest to us, and we have since been sorry that we did not make some attempt to preserve them as they were when discovered by my uncle. As it is they are now somewhat sunken in and wrecked, yet plain enough to be readily distinguished. I understand that there is another cave of the same character about fifteen miles further up the creek, and still others beyond that. They present an opportunity for some one with an antiquarian turn of mind, and it is to be hoped that their history will yet be written.

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## Winter of 1880 on the South Loup.

H. LOMAX.

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My first introduction to the South Loup river occurred in April, 1880, at a point about half a mile above the mouth of Ash creek. Having made the journey from Plum Creek in a heavily loaded wagon, we struck the river just as the sun was sinking into the western prairie and tinging the tops of the eastern hills with a glow of red. The log shanty in which we intended to camp was on the other side of the stream and we started across. Before proceeding ten feet our team stopped and the wagon settled to the axles in quicksand, the water gently washing the bottom of the wagon box. A portage was necessary, and not only was the cargo all carried across, but we had to wade back and forth with the different parts of the wagon, taking out a wheel at a time. Having at length arrived at our destination, cold, wet and weary, we proceeded to prepare our supper. Our log shanty in the middle of a dense grove of cottonwood and willow, had the river on one side and a bayou on the other. Before supper was ready a whirl of wings called me to the door. O, land of ducks! Hundreds were there before me of all colors and sizes—flying, swimming, diving, in the security of their ignorance. After this, duck was too common a food to be mentioned in our cuisine. Our shanty had been shingled with cow hides, thrown on the roof. During the night a cold north wind whistled through the crevices between the logs of our dwelling, which had not been chinked, and we arose, took off the roof covering and pinned the hides up against the wall to serve as siding. After this, whenever it rained we put the hides on the roof to keep out the water, and when it blew we put



them on the side of the house to keep out the wind, a very simple and effective device which furnished additional proof of the truth of the old saying that "necessity is the mother of invention." One of the settlers in this part of the country was Saul Garringer. He was a perfect architect in the construction of dugouts, and he evolved from the original trapper's hole in the ground a series of apartments which lacked only electric lights and steam heat to make them



H. LOMAX.



G. R. RUSSUM.

equal to any modern palatial residence. Whenever he was not making a new dugout he was building some addition to the old one. He was also a lineal descendant of Nimrod of old and hunted exclusively with the rifle. He it was who gave me the first clear conception of the possibilities of rifle-shooting. While hunting ducks with him one day he observed that I always aimed at the body of the bird; he explained to me that this cut the flesh up too much, and that he always hit them in the head.

The spring of 1880 was extremely dry; so dry that the wheat in the Platte valley refused to sprout, and had to be plowed up and corn planted in its place. On the third day of July it began to rain and the rest of the summer was excessively wet. August 10th a cloud-burst occurred in the vicinity now occupied by the village of Callaway, which caused a serious flood in the South Loup and Wood river valleys. The Loup bottoms were running with three or four feet of water for twelve hours, and the fringes of willows that lined the river banks were filled with cedar posts and rails that had been washed down from the corrals of ranches above. The rain, which fell during the greater portion of September, turned to snow in October, which continued to fall in enormous quantities all winter. During the fall the work of the bea-



ver which was plentiful along the river amounted to a veritable massacre of the timber which lined the banks. During the months of October and November they could be seen working in droves preparing for a long winter which their instinct warned them was coming on.

Thousands of sheep had been driven into the country during the summer of 1880, and the winter which followed left in many cases not more than twenty per cent. of the herds alive. After a severe snowstorm in October and cold weather in November the ice on the river was strong enough to bear heavy loads. The real winter snow began to fall December 16th, and from that time until March the ground had a covering of eighteen inches on the level, with drifts twenty feet deep. The wind was almost continuous and the cold at times intense. The cloudy days were unusually numerous for Nebraska. In December the clear days amounted to seventeen, in January sixteen, in February eighteen. The average temperature at eight o'clock a. m. in December was 33; in January 25.9; in February 30.4. Cattle on the range stood day after day, week after week, chewing leaves, twigs, branches and bark, until the trees were eaten bare as high as a cow could reach, and the branches were chewed so they looked like frayed ropes. Thousands of the poor brutes died, and it has always been a mystery to me how any survived. In the spring many of them which survived lost their horns and hoofs, which had been frozen and dropped off when the thaw came. When the ice broke up in the river it was a month before it could be crossed in safety. John McGinn was then located two miles up Ash creek, where the Plattsmouth ranch now is. He had purchased some corn in Wood river valley but was unable to haul it across the Loup river, and it had to be dragged across with a rope, one sack at a time. At that time there was not a bridge across the Loup in Custer county.

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## Spencer Park.

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W. H. Mauk.

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Spencer Park, located in township sixteen, range nineteen, comprises about 3,600 acres of level land surrounded by hills, and opening into the Muddy valley by a narrow passage half a mile northeast of the village of Berwyn. Its greatest length is three miles and its greatest width two miles. The soil is a black loam from three to six feet deep, underlaid with a fine, light-colored clay from thirty to fifty feet in depth. The soil is particularly adapted to hold moisture in seasons of drouth. An abundance of the finest water is had at from fifty to eighty feet, at which depth coarse gravel is struck.

Probably the first white men who looked over this park with a view of locating were George Early and Clark Wellman, in 1879. They took claims,

but they did not make permanent settlement on the land. The first permanent settler was Ira D. Spencer, in whose honor the park was named. When he got to Seneca, now Westerville, he made his first stop to look about for a location, fixing upon this little park as the place which best suited him. He staked out his claim in the summer of 1880, almost in the center of the park. J. E. Spencer, son of Ira D. Spencer, a bachelor, also took a claim. He is still living on the same claim, but he is no longer a lonely bachelor, and the dugout has been exchanged for a frame house. Several children call him "pa," and the wild claim has been converted into a well improved farm.

In the fall of 1880 an old man by the name of Gaskell and his son-in-law located and moved their families there; but being unprepared for the hard winter that followed they lost all their stock and abandoned their claims, selling their relinquishments to their present owner, W. H. Mauk, for twenty-five dollars apiece. Mr. Mauk, in May, 1887, made a dugout 8 by 10 feet, covered it with poles, brush and sod and began housekeeping as a bachelor, with a stove, bedstead and bedding, one dishpan, a skillet, a bread pan, a coffee pot, two plates, two knives and forks and a spoon. He has a better house now, and also a good housekeeper, and to his children he sometimes relates the following incident in his early housekeeping efforts: In the winter of 1882 a friend from the East made him a visit and it being extremely cold at the time, the larder was in a sadly depleted condition and no way of replenishing it until the weather became more moderate. About the time it should have become more moderate, a blizzard set in which lasted four days, and the guest was compelled to take his choice of bean soup, baked beans or starvation. As he had always detested beans in any form, he almost came to the conclusion that he would take his chances with starvation, but before the blizzard was over he changed his mind and took a sort of liking for beans, which have been a favorite food with him ever since.

In the summer of 1881 H. J. Dupes settled in the park. He still lives on this place, and from his comfortable home looks back over the hardship of the early days as if it were a dream. He also took a timber claim on section 9, which in 1887 he sold to Charles Kemp. Miss Juletta Wellman came from Lincoln in 1881, entered a homestead, built a sod house on it, and staid until she perfected her title, living alone and enduring the hardships incident to the times. She also entered a timber claim and is still the owner of both places. Clark Wellman bought the relinquishment of George Earley's homestead and sold it later to G. B. Greenwood, the present owner.

In the summer of 1882 Nathan Davidson and son, James, entered land. Both are still in possession of the original claims. The second son, Henry, entered land and began keeping bachelor's hall. His two grown up sisters helped him out with the household duties and also became general favorites with the young bachelors of the community. When we went over to their house we always "spruced up" a little, being particular to see that there was no flour on our clothing nor any dough on our hands. Henry still lives on his claim, but he has a wife and all the comforts that can be found on any well-improved farm. In the summer of 1883 R. W. Barton settled on a table overlooking the park. In the spring of 1884 Peter Rapp and his family made

settlement. C. Caswell located in 1884, and led the life of a bachelor, made a few improvements and sold out in 1889, since which time the place has changed hands several times, H. S. Wayne being the present owner. In the fall of 1883 J. B. Brown and his brother, D. O. Brown, took claims. Henry Webb settled with his family in 1883. In the summer of 1884 John McManigal and his wife, an aged couple, came here from Ohio to spend their last days in the pure air of the West, and are still living on their claim. Henry Thomas and his family came in 1885 and has built for himself a comfortable home.

I arrived in Custer county from the northwestern part of the state in April, 1881. My father and the rest of the family had moved from Illinois the previous fall and located on the Muddy about four miles from the park. When I arrived I found them living in a dugout 10 by 12 feet, which had to accommodate the family of seven persons. There being no room for beds, three bunks or shelves, made of poles, were erected on the wall upon which the bed clothing was spread. When I arrived the provisions were nearly exhausted, and we had to grind up some seed wheat in a coffee mill with which bread was made; some parched wheat was made to take the place of coffee, while some whole wheat boiled in salt and water came in handy by way of variety. Two of my father's horses had already died of starvation and the other two were so poor they could hardly stand up. Our nearest postoffice was at a point near where Broken Bow now is. In 1884 we organized a school district in the park, and in 1885 the railroad was built up the valley and the town of Berwyn started at the southwestern entrance of the park. This ended the freighting business. Since then the country has filled up with settlers, improvements have been made, and to-day we are a prosperous and happy community, with schools, churches and all the conveniences generally enjoyed by farming communities anywhere. What the future has in store for us, or what great men may spring from our humble and peaceful homes, time alone will tell.

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## Methodist Church, Callaway.

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In the early winter of 1880-81 Rev. Asbury Collins, one of the bold pioneer preachers, whose labors are known throughout the whole of western Nebraska, preached the first sermon in or near the settlement of Delight. This service was held in the sod school house, which stood at the foot of the hill, one mile west of the present site of Callaway. At Mr. Collins' next appointment, which was probably in January, 1881, he organized a society of the Methodist Episcopal church with nine members, four of whom lived in the immediate neighborhood, the remaining five coming as far as ten miles from their homes in Wood River valley. Mark H. Deems was appointed class leader, which office in the church he held until he moved away from Callaway. Mr. Collins' work was principally organizing new churches and forming new circuits, and he



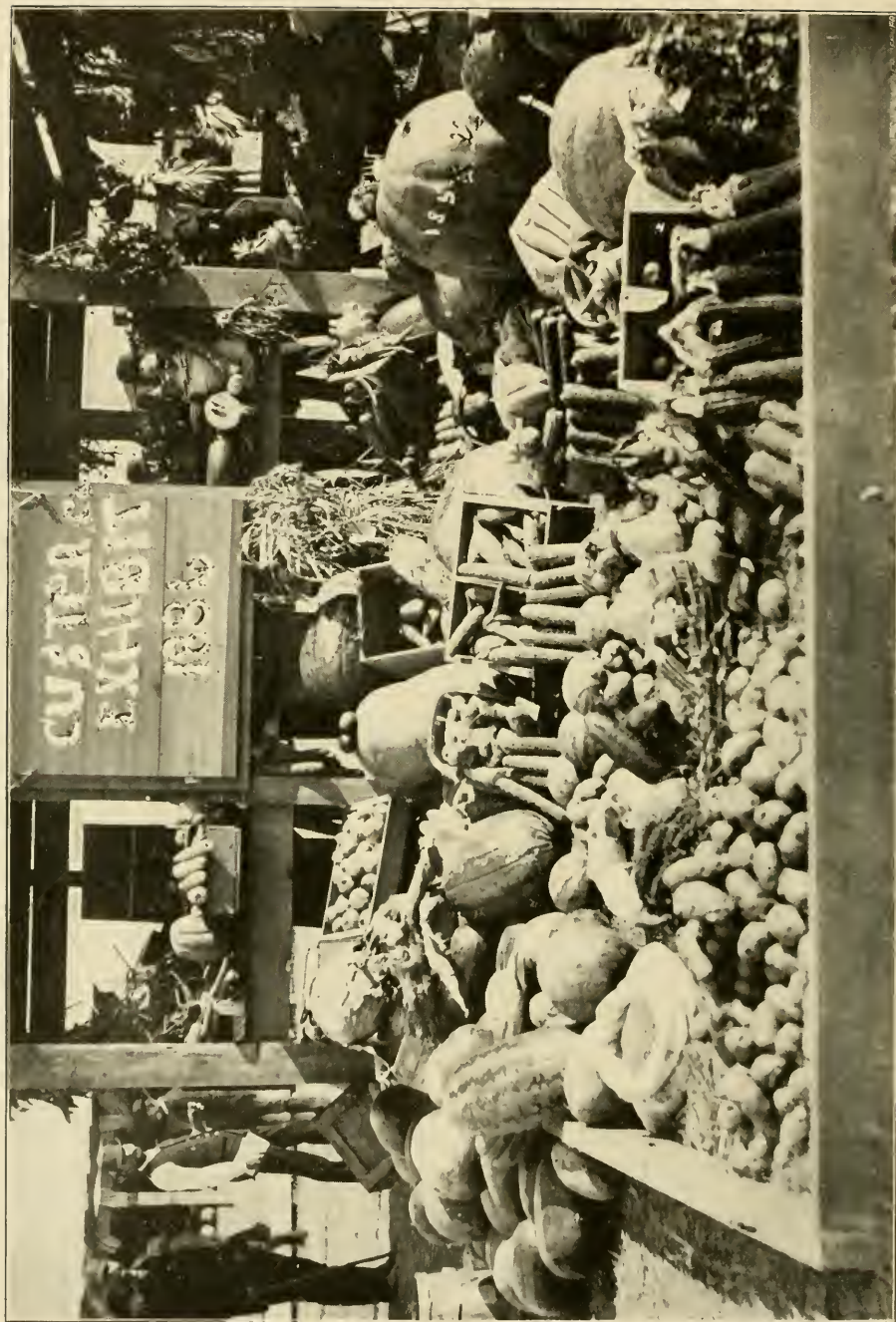
came to Delight only once a month, during the spring and summer following the organization of the church. In the summer of 1881 Rev. Charles H. Savidge, a local preacher from Wisconsin, came into the community and lived with his son at the Cottonwood ranch about three miles from Delight postoffice. Because of his own heavy work Mr. Collins placed the church at Delight in the hands of Mr. Savidge, who preached regularly for over two years.

In the fall of 1884 the church received for the first time a minister regularly appointed by the annual conference, Rev. D. M. Ellsworth, who had just come from Illinois. Mr. Ellsworth had shipped his goods to Kearney, where the conference was held that year. In order to have a home for his family he filed a homestead on a quarter section of land and put up a little house. The preaching places in the circuit were Delight, Roten Valley and Cliff. There had been a gradual increase in the membership, and after a protracted meeting held in the sod school house during the winter of 1884-5, the membership was thirty-five. The salary paid this year was \$340, to which was added \$125 from the missionary society of the church. In the summer of 1885 the people united in building a neat sod church on the timber claim of Ira Graves, not far from the sod school house where they had heretofore worshipped. The trustees were Ira Graves, Mark H. Deems, I. F. Miller, O. C. Murphy and William Engels, who were elected by the quarterly conference July 18th. The lumber for the roof and floor of the new church was hauled from Cozad, a distance of forty miles, and the chairs for seating from Plum Creek, now Lexington. The church was dedicated in November following, Rev. George W. Martin, presiding elder. During this year Arnold was added to the Delight circuit.

When the town of Callaway was laid out, in the summer of 1886, the preaching was moved from the church, which was nearly a mile out, to the dining room of the Deems hotel, then in course of erection. After the hotel was completed and occupied the church services were held in Smith's hall over a hardware store owned by Smith & Needham. This hall was commonly known as the "Callaway Opera house." For its use the church paid \$2 each Sunday and the same amount for each prayer meeting or extra service.

Rev. Thomas H. Thurber was the next pastor, coming to the charge in the fall of 1886. His family made their home in a sod house belonging to Mark H. Deems, and reserved by him when he sold his homestead for the townsite. Mr. Thurber was himself "holding down" a claim in Dawson county, and so moved his family back to his claim in the spring, where they remained until he made final proof in the fall. Mr. Thurber was reappointed for another year, and immediately after his return from conference the people commenced the building of the first frame church in the town of Callaway. The building cost \$1,000 and was considered at that time quite an undertaking, but the trustees and members were determined in their efforts and the people of the community responded generously. The church was dedicated December 4, 1887, by Rev. Leslie Stevens, at that time presiding elder. Only \$300 yet remained unpaid, but to those who had already contributed all that they felt able, it seemed like attempting the impossible to try to raise that amount. Unwilling to fail at the last moment, eight men agreed together to give each \$25 more, and when the call was made and these eight in succession subscribed so liberally, others





Custer County Exhibit of 1886 at Broken Bow, Neb.

also responded, and in a few minutes the whole amount was raised. After returning from their homestead, the pastor's family had occupied a single room over one of the stores in the town, for which they had to pay \$12 per month, and it was not difficult to see that a parsonage was an actual necessity. Accordingly as soon as the church was completed the trustees took shares in the building and loan association and immediately commenced work on the parsonage. It was completed in February, 1888, and from that time a good home—small, but cozy and comfortable—has been ready for the Methodist minister and his family. The securing of a church building and parsonage may be considered as closing the pioneer history of the Methodist church of Callaway, and having laid aside its swaddling clothes it has had only the ordinary experience of a church—hardships, opposition and varying degrees of success—important in themselves, but not of sufficient interest for a pioneer history.

Author's Note—I am sorry we do not have the minister's name who furnished us this article.

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## Custer County Agricultural Society.

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One of the most important organizations in the county is the Custer County Agricultural Society. It has done much toward the development of the county and is an institution to which Custer county people point with no little degree of pride. The large scope of territory from which the annual fair draws makes it an attraction which brings to Broken Bow an immense concourse of people every fall. It has gained the well-earned reputation of one of the very best fairs in the state. In the summer of 1881 a little band of homesteaders met at the town of Westerville and organized what was known as the "Custer County Agricultural Society."

The organizers were C. S. Elison, S. C. Beebe, George O. Waters, A. W. Squires, D. M. Amsberry, R. C. Talbot, J. H. Westervelt, J. L. H. Knight, F. D. Miller, John Welsh, Thomas Blowers, Edgar Varney, Martin Gering, C. T. Crawford and B. E. Lamphear. The first officers were C. S. Elison, president; George O. Waters, vice president; S. C. Beebe, secretary, and C. T. Crawford, treasurer. The first fair was held the latter part of August the same year, and while it was a primitive one, yet it was a great event for a new county, and the attendance included every homesteader within a radius of a good many miles. The attractions were limited, horse racing being the main feature, while a pulling match between Frank Doty of Lillian and H. Weakling of Berwyn was an important event. The exhibits were, of course, light, but nevertheless the display of corn, wheat and oats was far better than one would expect in a country that was but sparsely populated. The pumpkin and melon show at this fair was something marvelous.

Another fair was held at Westerville in the fall of 1882. The following year Broken Bow had gained sufficient prominence to become a rival of West-

erville and divided honors with her by the fair being held three days at each place.

The first fair held in Broken Bow occurred about the middle of September, 1883, shortly after the Westerville fair. It was a great event. The grounds were located where the present court house stands and the race course circled around a couple of blocks, where the exciting races took place. It is hardly necessary to add that in those days, with the population made up largely of young men and the sturdy cowboy element predominating, that favorite horses were backed with plenty of money and plenty of nerve. At both the Westerville and Broken Bow fairs that year a leading attraction was the walking of the tight rope by Eli Armstrong, who, at the time of the publication of this book, is sheriff of Custer county. Bronco riding was a great attraction and the cowboy who could rope, bridle, saddle and mount a wild horse, unaided, and ride to a given point first, was sure of a good purse.

In 1884 the fairs were again held at Broken Bow and Westerville during September and October under the direction of the same society, met at Westerville and voted the exclusive rights to a fair at Broken Bow. Shortly after this the society was incorporated under the laws of the state, its official title being "The Custer County Agricultural Society and Live Stock Exchange." Forty acres of land were purchased a mile east of Broken Bow early in 1885 and permanent quarters were established. Suitable buildings were erected and a splendid half-mile track was made. The fair has been held regularly every year and has been constantly enlarged from its small beginning with only a few dollars offered in premiums, until its premiums and purses have, during the past few years, reached \$3,500, and its crowds come from fifty miles in every direction. Its list of life members is well up in the hundreds and it is without doubt one of the most progressive agricultural societies in Nebraska. Through the efforts of the agricultural society Custer county captured the gold medal offered by the state fair for the county exhibit which could take three successive first prizes. These prizes were won in 1888, 1889 and 1890 and this medal is prized very highly as an everlasting monument to the agricultural resources of the great "State of Custer." A county that can win such a prize in three successive contests with nearly 100 competitors, surely has some merit to its claim as an agricultural county.

Perhaps a word would not be out of place regarding the officers of this society. They are as follows:

Presidents—C. S. Elison, 1881; George O. Waters, 1882 to 1884 inclusive; F. Zimmerer, 1885; Edmund King, 1886 and 1887; J. D. Ream, 1888 to 1896 inclusive; L. H. Jewett, 1897 to 1899 inclusive; J. O. Taylor, 1900 and 1901. Secretaries—S. C. Beebe, 1881; J. L. H. Knight, 1882 to 1885 inclusive; A. R. Humphrey, 1886; J. L. H. Knight, 1887 to 1890 inclusive; W. H. Cramer, 1891; Cary Kay, 1892; F. H. Young, 1893 and 1894; L. McCandless, 1895; J. M. Fodge, 1896; E. R. Purcell, 1897 to 1901 inclusive. Treasurers—C. T. Crawford, 1880 to 1882 inclusive; D. M. Amsberry, 1883 to 1886 inclusive; O. P. Perley, 1887 to 1893 inclusive; E. F. McClure, 1894 to 1898 inclusive; J. A. Harris, 1899; A. R. Humphrey, 1900; W. D. Blackwell, 1901.

The board of directors consists of nine members, three of whom are



elected every year. This board has always been selected from among the very best and most progressive farmers, stock raisers and business men of the county. The present officers (1901) are: President, J. O. Taylor; vice president, Thomas Finlen; secretary, E. R. Purcell; assistant secretary, F. W. Hayes; treasurer, W. D. Blackwell; directors, Ed McComas, G. R. Russom, John Finch, A. E. Hanna, W. A. George, H. Lomax, C. H. Miller, E. C. Gibbons and P. F. Campbell.

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## The Oxley Trial.

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The case of the state vs. William Oxley was called by Judge Sullivan as the first case on the docket Monday morning. County Attorney L. E. Kirkpatrick, J. S. Kirkpatrick and Charles H. Holcomb appeared for the state, and the accused was represented by J. R. Dean of this city and Judge Aaron Wall of Loup City. The prisoner, accompanied by Sheriff Armstrong, appeared promptly at 10 o'clock. The jury as chosen are as follows: J. L. King, J. H. Cosner, G. T. Robinson, W. H. Mauk, J. E. Evans, Godfrey Nansel, W. P. Trew, H. Wilkie, George Cox, S. P. Young, James May, T. D. Gill.

W. H. Fullhart, an eccentric character, whose brick residence is pictured in this work, was found dead on his ranch, eighteen miles north-east of Anselmo on Saturday, October 24, 1900, with the skull broken, apparently by some blunt instrument. The body was found about a mile from the house, and near it was a sled on which were two rolls of fence wire, with which the murdered man had been building a fence at the time of his death. No horse was attached to the sled, but the harness was found in the barn with blood on the traces, lines and snaps. Fullhart was a bachelor, and lived alone, except when he occasionally had some one to work for him. It had been known that about ten days before his death he had a young man working for him, but none of the neighbors could say whether the young man was there at the time the murder occurred or not. Fullhart was reputed to be quite well-to-do, and it was known that he had at least \$1,600 in cash in his possession a few weeks previous to the time his dead body was found. Seven dollars and fifty cents in money was found on his person, but none about his premises, and of his cattle, of which he had about fifty head, fifteen were missing. A few days later a young man by the name of William Oxley, who had formerly worked for Fullhart, was arrested on suspicion of being the murderer. Oxley had been trying to sell some cattle which he said he had purchased from a man by the name of Crawford, which proved to belong to Fullhart, but his explanations did not satisfy the authorities. The trial commenced at Broken Bow on Monday, February 11, 1901, and attracted a great deal of notice from the fact that young Oxley had been known in the county for a number of years and bore a good reputation. There



were eighty-six witnesses in the case and the legal talent was the best that could be had in the county. The trial lasted a week and resulted in a verdict of murder in the second degree. As there was nothing to show that any struggle had occurred at the time of the murder it looked as if the murder



The Fullhart House, showing the old sled on which Mr. Fullhart was hauling wire when murdered.

must have been done in cold blood, but in the absence of any direct evidence to connect Oxley with the crime, the jury concluded to give him the benefit of the doubt to the extent of finding for murder in the second degree. Oxley protested his innocence all through the trial, but neither himself nor his attorneys made any attempt to explain how he came into possession of Fullhart's cattle. Oxley was sentenced to serve twenty-six years in the State Penitentiary.

## Irrigation in Custer County.

\*E. P. Savage.

It is thought by many that irrigation is a new idea, or something that came with the electric car, the telephone, or as one of our old ladies in this county puts it, "a new fangled notion," but to those who have that impression, I would suggest a reference to Genesis, 2:10. They will find that the



Hon. E. P. SAVAGE,  
Governor of Nebraska.

apple which Eve ate, and which caused the downfall of mankind, was grown by irrigation. It reads: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it parted and went into four heads." Now, I believe this is as ancient authority as we have, and it is pretty reliable. Again, we have it from equally reliable authority that the corn which Joseph sold to his brethren in Egypt was raised by irrigation. After Joseph was sold into Egypt he had a canal constructed, about 300 miles long and about 300 feet wide, for irrigating purposes, and this very same canal is still used for irrigation.

These facts would go to prove that irrigation is not a new idea, yet in its experimental stage. Irrigation was carried on in all civilized countries hun-

\*Hon. E. P. Savage was elected lieutenant governor, and by the resignation of Governor Dietrich became governor of the state, May 1, 1901.

dreds of years before Columbus discovered America, and even on this continent I have myself seen evidences of its having been used in Iowa, Colorado, Mexico and Arizona by prehistoric people who occupied these portions of the western hemisphere. We have many evidences to prove that they were an enlightened, progressive and prosperous people. It is also a fact that in all countries at the present time the most intelligent and progressive people are those who have the most improved methods of irrigation. No means has ever yet been devised whereby irrigation can be carried on to any great extent except by taking the water from a natural stream and carrying it upon the land by gravitation, and in order to do this successfully and profitably the stream must have a waterfall of five or more feet to the mile, and then not run too deep below the surface of the land to be irrigated. Nature has evidently "done all things well," for in all the arid and semi-arid parts of the country where irrigation is necessary that man may reap the most from his labor, the streams have a fall of from six to 150 feet to the mile, and usually run near the surface. This country lies close to the eastern limit of the semi-arid part of the continent, where irrigation may be profitably used every year, and is peculiarly provided by nature for its use in its abundance of water supply, and the ease with which it may be distributed over the land. Another peculiar fact is that there is not another stream on the continent east of the Loup rivers where irrigation may be carried on to any great extent, for the reason that they run too deep and the fall is too slight. Again nature is in the right, for east of these rivers the continent is supplied with a sufficient rainfall.

There is no question about it, we have in Custer county, taking into consideration our climate, soil, proximity to market, abundant supply of pure water and water for irrigating purposes, one of the best parts of our grand country, and capable, under scientific management, of sustaining a dense agricultural population. When more people come here who are willing to assist in utilizing the advantages that God has placed in our hands, our valleys will be filled with prosperous towns. Already many thousands of dollars have been expended in the country for irrigating purposes, but owing to causes that it is not necessary to mention here, the plans were abandoned before completion. We will hope for a bright future for the country when it is placed under the benefits of irrigation.

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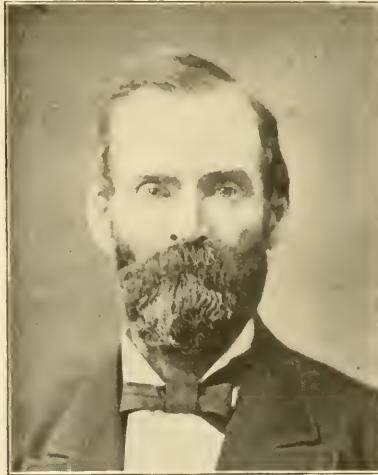
## The Dairying Industry.

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W. S. Wescott.

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While dairying in Custer county is yet in its infancy, enough has been done along this line to demonstrate by the most elaborate and exhaustive tests that the native grasses of this county produce butter and cheese of the highest and best quality, and although conditions are not at this time favor-



W. S. WESCOTT.

Biography of W. S. Wescott.—W. S. Wescott was born in Wethersfield, Wyoming county, New York, in 1828, and immigrated with his parents to Wisconsin in 1843 when a boy of fifteen. He went immediately into the "cattle business," which had been a lifelong hobby—that is, he hired out on a farm and invested his first earnings in a calf, from which his herds increased until he has since counted his cattle by the thousands. While a citizen of Wisconsin he occupied many positions of trust and honor, among them being four terms in the Wisconsin Legislature, two in the Assembly and two in the Senate. He located in Custer county, Nebraska, in 1880, at what was then known as the Big Spring. In 1885 the firm of Wescott & Gibbons was established. In 1887 they located and started the town of Wescott on the Middle Loup river, built a large store, town hall and other buildings.

able enough to warrant farmers in making sudden or expensive changes in their modes of farming, yet the fact remains that the farmers of Custer county must eventually adopt this branch of industry to insure certain and profitable returns for their labor. If Custer county has any crop that is sure and certain under all circumstances, that never fails in time of drought, that grows on the highest and driest land nearly as well as on the lowest, that crop is grass, which by this particular mode of farming can be turned directly and certainly into money. Then how long will the farmers of Custer county go on in the old way of plowing and sowing grain, trying to beat natural conditions in the attempt to raise crops that will not grow. Buying reapers and binders and threshing machines, working themselves to death to enrich machine builders and their agents, and impoverishing their land and themselves



at the same time, when by this sure and certain method of farming, with small outlay for milk pail and stool they can soon get out of debt and have money to loan? This is not idle talk, speculation or conjecture. What man has done man may do, and in the experience of dairymen or the history of the business there is no record of failure. Can as much be said of any other business? Then it ought not require much argument to induce farmers to engage in the business of turning these vast acres of grass into money.

Forty years ago conditions in Green county, Wisconsin, were very similar to those existing in Custer county to-day. Green county comprised an area of twenty-four miles square, and the land was cultivated very much the same as the land in this county at the present time. But now all is changed and Green county is one of the most prosperous in the state of Wisconsin. Land that then sold for \$30 per acre is now worth and readily sells for \$100 per acre, and there is very little of the land that is not devoted exclusively to the production of grass and forage crops. As a consequence the most of the farmers are prosperous and wealthy. Conditions in Custer county may be changed similarly if farmers will stop buying machinery and arrange their farming so as to utilize all this vast sea of grass which now goes to waste. The whole question of dairying hinges upon, and is determined by, the fact that the native grasses of Custer county produce butter and cheese of the finest and best quality. Neither the cheapness of the land, the certainty and great surplus of the grass crop, nor the favorable climate are taken into account at all in making up a verdict for or against this proposition. But when these facts will impress themselves upon the minds of the farmers sufficiently strong as to induce them to make a change and engage in this work, is uncertain.

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## Swine Raising.

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\*F. M. Currie.

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Custer county is in the geographical center of the state of Nebraska. Its elevation is about 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, and the average rainfall is not far from twenty inches per annum. It produces a large variety of nutritious grasses, and is well watered. Although streams are not very abundant, water is to be found everywhere in inexhaustible quantities at various depths ranging from a few feet in the valleys to 400 feet on the highest table lands. It was the home of countless numbers of buffalo before the advent of the cowboy. With the coming of the cattlemen the buffalo were driven out, and it became a veritable paradise for the large cattle ranch. After it was opened for settlement the homesteader claimed its broad and

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\*Hon. F. M. Currie is now serving his second term as state senator, and was a prominent candidate for the United States Senate, 1901.

fertile prairies as his right under the law and the cattle rancher was obliged to vacate. But the number of cattle were increased instead of diminished. In place of a few men owning hundreds and even thousands of head, a large number of men became the owners of small herds, and the total number was increased. Much of the land was broken out, and general agriculture became the occupation of the early settlers. Then it was that a more intensive agriculture became necessary, and the farmers turned their attention to the poor man's friend—the hog. The hog is essentially the friend of the poor farmer because it requires very little capital with which to make a start. The number of hogs in Custer county has increased very rapidly, until nearly every farmer owns from ten to four or five hundred head. Of course the keeping of hogs necessitates the growing of corn. With the exception of two years—those of 1890 and 1894—Custer county has produced a sufficient quantity of corn to mature most of the hogs raised within her borders. The high altitude, the pure atmosphere and excellent drainage of Custer county makes it exceedingly healthful for both human beings and animals. The animal diseases which are so common in most parts of the United States are almost unknown in Custer county. In recent years there has been a slight loss from disease known (in the common parlance) as hog cholera. But Custer county has never had an epidemic which carried off whole herds of swine.

The farmer, unlike his predecessor, the cattle man, usually markets his cattle in a finished condition. The cattle man of the olden times gathered his beeves from the plains and shipped them in large numbers to the market in Chicago or Kansas City. Those that were fat enough to kill were sold to the butcher; those that were not finished were sold to the feeders in Iowa, eastern Nebraska, eastern Kansas and Illinois. The farmer and cattle man of the present day feeds his own cattle and ships them, ready for the block, to the market in Omaha, which is distant about 180 miles. The cost of transportation is about \$38 per carload. In preparing his beef, the farmer finds a large saving in the use of the hog. The cattle are put in yards and fed all the grain they will eat; at the same time hogs are put in the yard to follow the cattle, cleaning up the waste. The cattle usually absorb about one-half of the nutritive value of the corn that passes through their stomachs, the other half would be wasted were it not for the hog which follows the cattle and the waste is thus transformed into pork. The hog and the cattle industry go together and furnish a considerable profit to the farmer. In good seasons the average farmer on 160 acres of good land is able to turn off a carload of cattle and a carload of hogs each year. The cattle are pastured on the grazing lands of the county. They are fed in winter on the rough feed produced on the farming land, consisting of cornstalks, straw, millet, etc. The hogs are raised usually during the summer season and in autumn the two are placed together, the farmer secures the entire profit accruing to the man who raises the cattle, who raises the hogs, and who feeds them. Poland China is by far the most popular breed of hogs, while Jersey Reds, Chester Whites and Berkshires are very abundant.

In some of the valleys farmers have turned their attention to the raising of alfalfa. They are thus enabled to raise their young swine at a very low

cost, and are only put into the yard to be finished. In 1887 Custer county shipped 32,640 hogs from the various stations of the railway within her borders. Allowing for a reasonable number that were shipped from stations outside of Custer county, but contiguous thereto, it is safe to estimate the number of hogs at 50,000. The future of the swine industry of Custer county is very promising and it will always be one of the most important industries of the county.

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## Raising Horses for Profit.

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J. M. Scott.

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Perhaps there is no department of the farm where so many men fail as in this. The horse is fine in organism, spirited by nature, and requires most careful, intelligent and constant attention. There is no wider field in farm economics for the exercise of mature judgment and sound practical attainments than raising horses for profit. There are so many factors upon which the business depends that every man, before he enters upon it, should make a careful survey of the whole field and accurately weigh each proposition, and if possible determine whether or not he can meet all of its requirements. Every man should determine the amount of capital that will be required and whether he possesses it. The element of time must ever be uppermost. Can he wait for returns? It takes longer to get a developed horse on the market than any other farm animal. The expense measured in labor and money must be carefully estimated. Many men fail because they are unable to meet current expenses and the result is invariably an inferior product. The necessary and best forage plants must not be lost sight of by the breeder, pure and abundant water is absolutely necessary to the horse's well-being, and at all times must be inaccessible to him. Well ventilated and clean stables should be prepared in order to prevent disease and to insure a healthy condition. Accessibility to good sires is quite necessary. The best sire accessible should be mated with your females if you improve your horses. The above are some of the more important items for the breeder to consider and he must meet their demands. Attention should be given to the demand of the market. Most men breed horses here, as elsewhere, to please their fancy, and when the time comes to market them they find their horses do not pay for the cost of production. They then conclude that the business is not profitable. This country is a grand country for the successful breeding of horses for profit. We have here an ideal climate, pure water, abundant and nutritious forage plants, dry soil and hardly any insect pests.

To the farmer and breeder there should be but a single ideal, and that ideal should be the horse that will bring the greatest returns for the time and

expense required for his production and the labor necessary to break and fit him for the market. The horse that will bring the greatest returns for necessary expenditure is the horse that should be bred. To the farmer there can be but one class of profitable horses and that is the draft. In an agricultural country, as ours is, the constant demand will ever be for a large-sized, short-backed, strong, flat-legged, docile animal. The demand for useful farm horses in the great agricultural districts east of Nebraska will constantly increase as population thickens up in the already congested country. That market will absorb all our surplus horses for years to come. A farmer who has three or four large-sized brood mares can do his own work with them, can raise colts enough to take their places when they are sold or when they die, and still have a surplus for the market. The labor of breaking and fitting them for market is quite trifling, and attended with slight expense, and while this is being done the colt can be put to work and made to earn what he eats.

Few men possess sufficient means to experiment in breeding horses, or, for that matter, in any other kind of stock. No man can afford to breed trotting and running horses except a man of large means and unbounded leisure. Few farmers have either. The horse is the noblest animal God has given to man, and the higher bred, the more perfectly developed, the higher price he will command, but the farmer's business is to farm, to attend to his stock, and to carefully educate his children. As it requires years of hard study and close application to specialize upon any subject none but the rich can indulge their taste for breeding and developing fancy driving horses. A farmer must neglect other business in order to develop a horse and to bring him to a standard of excellence where he will bring a remunerative price for the time, labor and expense necessary to develop him. The successful man along this line has been so far an accident. Can we, as farmers, afford to risk our future upon so uncertain a proposition? I say no. Then let us breed nothing but first-class draft horses. Give them abundant and nutritious food, break them when colts when we have the most time to spare from our other work, work them carefully and when old enough finish them for market. Breeding for profit will then be a certainty.

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## Douglass Grove Irrigation Ditch.

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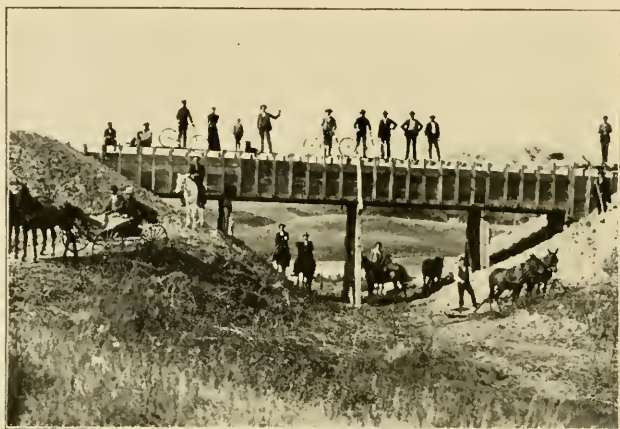
E. C. Gibbons.

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If the terrible drought of 1894 was responsible for the construction of the Douglass Grove irrigating ditch it has proven to be a blessing in disguise to the people of the Middle Loup valley, as it was in that year that the ditch was located, surveyed and active work commenced, and it was by means obtained by working on this ditch that a large number of the people of this



township were enabled to live through that memorable winter and to eke out a miserable existence until another crop could be raised. An attempt was made to induce the township to help in the work, as the sum asked to be voted would return to the taxpayers in remuneration for their work on the



Flume on the Wescott Irrigation Ditch.

ditch, and thus help all concerned; but this aid was refused and those living under the proposed ditch were compelled to organize a company and vote bonds upon themselves to obtain money to carry on and complete the undertaking. I will say nothing about their repeated discouragements and failures, but after one of the most desperate struggles, like Bruce's spider, they overcame all obstacles and the ditch has been finished from the Sargent bridge to Spring creek at Longlass Grove, a distance of thirteen and one-half miles, and covering an area of about 7,000 acres of valuable land.

As this is the only canal in this section of the country that has been successfully completed and is now in successful operation, blessing its builders with it benefactions, it must be stated that its completion is due to the unremitting and untiring efforts of a very few men who stood by it through evil report as well as good report until it was an accomplished fact, and the wonderful results obtained from the use of the water it furnishes have compelled those who were hitherto lukewarm supporters to become the most enthusiastic and generous friends of the enterprise. The ditch company is at the present time officered as follows: E. C. Gibbons, president; W. H. Comstock, secretary; Charles Wescott, treasurer.

## A Trip through the Sand Hills.

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We thought perhaps some of your readers might be interested in some of the country we have passed over, so have jotted down a few items. With our photo outfit we left Broken Bow for a run of six or seven weeks through the sand hills of Cherry county, Nebraska, among the cattle ranches. Our first



Chas. Austin's Ranch on Big Alkali Lake, Cherry County, Neb.

stop was at West Star, in the beautiful Middle Loup valley, twenty-two miles north of Broken Bow, where a flouring mill is to be erected in the near future. Then northwest to Brewster, thirty miles, a small village on the North Loup river. West, on south side of the river, twelve miles, is the I. S. Northrup ranch, one of the old land marks of Blaine county. We cross the river here and go northwest up Goose creek, which gradually widens out into a beautiful hay valley, with small cattle ranches about every three to five miles apart, they having claims on the valley to cut grass for winter and using the sand hills for range in the summer, making raising cattle easy. The first ranch in Cherry county is a small sheep ranch owned by John Good. Next is a sheep and cattle ranch, owned by the Wysong brothers. From here we arrive at a fine cattle ranch with about 400 cattle owned by the Body brothers. They range north several miles and southwest seven miles to the North Loup, where they have another ranch. From here we go to the J. F. Chappels ranch, owning about 150 cattle with fine range. They own two claims and a school section. They cut about 500 tons of hay on the opposite side of the valley.

Northeast three-fourths of a mile is J. B. Stoll's ranch, with about 300 head of fine Shropshire sheep. He has five claims in the valley, with three miles of running water; cuts about 500 tons of hay.

Thence northeast to the King ranch, running about 500 head of Short-horns and Herefords. Appearances indicate that Mr. King thoroughly understands the cattle business.

Thence to the O. Keller ranch, who runs about 150 cattle and cuts 1,500 tons of hay. Then to the Smith ranch, where about 500 head more cattle are found. Young Smith and his sister seem to be enjoying ranch life.

From there we went northeast about thirty-five miles to the big Alkali lake, where is located the cattle ranch of C. A. Austin, one of Custer county's old pioneers, and one of the largest hearted men in Cherry county. Here we made our headquarters while canvassing the adjoining country, and we shall always remember with pleasure the days spent with Charles and his family.

Mr. Austin and son, N. J., and son-in-law, H. S. Savage, have from 400 to 500 head of very high-grade cattle, fifty head of registered Herefords, besides high-grade Durhams and Polled-Angus, and seventy head of horses. They cut 400 tons of hay and have twenty miles of fence. Postoffice, Simeon.

John A. Gee, well known in Custer county in 1878-9, is now a prosperous ranchman near Kennedy with about 150 head of cattle. Postoffice, Kennedy.

James Steadman came to Westerville, Cherry county, in 1879. Mrs. Steadman is now running a general store at Kennedy. Her four boys are all in the cattle business and prospering.

C. F. Cooper, fine Shorthorn cattle, 200 head; cuts 400 tons of hay; seven miles of fence; is correspondent for the division of botany, Washington, D. C.; has forty acres of red top; he claims it is a grand success. Postoffice, Oasis.

Rake Ranch, Anderson & Rounds, on Dewey lake; 1,600 cattle, mostly Herefords; fifty miles of fence; cuts 2,500 tons hay. Postoffice, Simeon.

We now come back to William S. Kennedy, northeast of Elsmere. Mr. Kennedy is an old Custer county man; settled ten miles west of Merna in 1883; is now located in Lakeland township, Brown county; 600 head of cattle, Herefords and Durhams; forty miles of fence; cuts 700 tons hay.

Miss Emma Robertson is located a few miles southwest of Mr. Kennedy, on Goose creek, with a small bunch of fine sheep. Postoffice, Elsmere.

About two miles further south is the Hinkson Bros. ranch; 600 head mixed cattle; Preston Hinkson, manager; cut 300 tons hay; the cattle raised in the sand hills and taken to Hall county, Nebraska, sixteen miles west of Grand Island, on a farm owned by the brothers to be fattened for market.

C. W. Bennet ranch at Simeon, Cherry county; 600 head cattle, mostly Galloways and Herefords; cuts 900 tons hay; twenty miles fence; settled in 1885.

Spall Bros. ranch; 125 head cattle, thirty horses; cuts 600 tons hay; fifteen miles fence. Postoffice, Simeon, Cherry county, Nebraska.

C. J. Rogers' ranch on Mud lake east of Big Alkali; small bunch well-bred cattle; cuts 120 tons hay. Postoffice, Simeon.



Our Camp at foot of Devil's Slide, Cherry County, Neb., on Snake River.

John Cronin ranch, east of Long lake, eighteen miles south of Valentine; cuts 1,000 tons of hay; 600 head western and native cattle; twenty miles fence; Wood lake twelve miles.

C. L. Latta, on Gordon creek; small bunch of well-bred Polled-Angus cattle; 5,000 acres under fence; cuts 200 tons hay. Postoffice, Oasis.

W. D. Morgareidge; 350 cattle, mostly Herefords; cuts from five to eight hundred tons hay; twenty miles fence; north on Gordon creek; seven miles running water. Postoffice, Simeon.

John B. Lord, Triangle ranch, on Snake river, three miles from mouth; 300 western cattle and high-grade Galloways; cuts three to four hundred tons hay; seventeen miles fence. Postoffice, Simeon.

Horse Head ranch, on Gordon creek; George N. Davis; 150 head native cattle; seventeen miles fence; cuts 500 tons hay.

W. G. Ballard owns three ranches: No. 1, Ballard Marsh; No. 2, Mule Lake; No. 3, at mouth of Gordon creek; 1,600 cattle, 300 horses; cuts 3,000 tons hay; seventy-five miles fence. Postoffice, Simeon.



David Hammah, on Marsh lake, twenty miles south of Wood lake; 1,400 head Herefords and Shorthorns; cuts 2,500 tons hay; fifty miles fence.

Kennedy, Cherry County, Neb., Jan. 13, 1900.—We started from William Erickson's, three miles west of Kennedy, Cherry county, Nebraska. This ranch is located on Gordon creek, about seventy-five miles from the head waters. Mr. Erickson is a prosperous ranchman, has 600 head of cattle, controls about one township of land and cuts about 1,000 tons of hay. His range is north on Bordman creek and on the Snake river, two of the most beautiful streams in the state. Bordman creek is stocked with salmon trout, which is the ranchman's delight.

Kennedy is a beautiful little village, having a general store, livery and feed stable, hotel and blacksmith shop. It has a daily mail from Valentine, northeast about forty-five miles, and one from Thedford, southeast fifty miles. The ranchmen here are talking of running a telephone line to Valentine from Kennedy. If successful it will be extended to Pass, a distance of fifteen miles southeast to a ranch owned by the Standard Cattle Company, who have already fifty-two miles of telephone line connecting their ranches, and extending to Pullman and to Carver ranches west. This company expects this summer to extend their line from Pullman, their present headquarters, to Whitman, southeast about forty miles. This telephone system is destined to be one of the greatest conveniences the cattlemen will have, and soon all the ranches will be connected, which will save them thousands of dollars annually. Mr. Erickson went with us as a guide.

We made our first stop at M. Dunham's ranch, two miles west up the Gordon. Mr. D. has about 150 head of cattle, controls about two sections of land, cuts about 100 tons of hay.

The next stop was at the Bachelor ranch, about two miles northeast on the Bordman. This ranch controls about seven miles of hay land on the Bordman valley and about one township of land. The land is fenced and cross-fenced. He runs about 1,000 head of Shorthorn cattle, has frame buildings, and can cut probably 1,500 tons of hay.

From here northeast we go to the Nels Rowley ranch, with about 500 head of Polled-Angus cattle, on the Bordman. He cuts from six to eight hundred tons of hay and controls about five miles of running water and about ten sections of land.

The Ball ranch is three miles northwest, up a beautiful hay valley; runs from 1,500 to 2,000 head of cattle, Herefords and Shorthorns; they cut probably 600 tons of hay and range 31, 32 and 33, about eighteen miles long.

Southwest four miles is the W. E. Waite ranch on Bordman creek. Mr. Waite has about nine hay claims, cuts 1,500 tons of hay, is well fitted with frame buildings suitable for a fine cattle ranch, but no cattle at present. Here is the end of the Kennedy and Valentine mail route postoffice, Chesterfield.

Next is a bachelor by the name of Charles Lilebrink, who has a claim south half mile, has a few cattle. From here up the Bordman to one of the Glespie Bros. and Stutter ranches, where they are wintering about 600 head of mixed cattle. From here we went to their home ranch, "Arkansaw Bob"

and his brother, Jim, taking great pleasure in showing us over their extensive ranch. They have about 1,000 head of cattle at the home ranch, cut about 1,500 tons of hay. This ranch is located on the Bordman. Their range is on the Gordon, Bordman creek and Snake river.

Southeast four miles is Mr. Farnam's place, a small, well-to-do ranchman with about thirty-five head of cattle on the Gordon creek.

Southwest three miles is Mr. Clemens, a small ranchman with about fifty head of fine Shorthorn cattle. From here back northeast on Gordon creek, about two miles, is the Gorsuch Bros. ranch, who have about 200 head of Shorthorns and Herefords.

West up Gordon creek about three miles is the Newton postoffice, on the I. W. Russell & Son ranch, which is quite a fine place, with several hundred head of cattle. Mr. R. claims 600 tons of hay on two quarter sections of land; do not know the amount on the ranch.

From there, four miles northwest, is the Charles Kime ranch, trimmed up with frame house and many modern improvements. He has probably 200 head of Shorthorn and Hereford cattle.

South one mile is the G. W. Ladely ranch; Shorthorn and Hereford cattle, about 800 in number. He controls the range from the Gordon to the north fork of the North Loup, a distance of seven miles.

Twelve miles southwest is Pullman postoffice, where is located the headquarters of the Standard Cattle Company.

Northeast two miles is the A. Burr ranch, one of the most prosperous small ranchers in the state, running about 500 head of mostly Shorthorn cattle. Mr. Burr is one of the county commissioners of Cherry county.

Six miles northeast is the Carver ranch, the home of the Standard Cattle Company, who have been putting in many modern improvements. They have installed as cook, Billy Simmons, one of Custer county's most popular bachelors. We photographed Billy and his dogs. One of these dogs, a bloodhound by the name of Jess, cost the company \$250.

Four miles northeast is the Phil Pullman ranch, another Standard Cattle Company ranch. This company has about 7,000 cattle distributed at their different ranches, fifty-two miles of telephone, controls about fifty miles of North Loup river.

The Charley Hoyt ranch is about fifteen miles southwest from Pullman. This is a fine place and Mr. Hoyt has about 500 head of fine cattle, controls about one township of land.

Southeast four miles is Wright's ranch, with a nice little bunch of cattle. From here back to Pullman, where we photographed Mr. John Porter, foreman of the Standard Cattle Company, and his little span of Shetland ponies.

Northeast is the Yearling ranch three miles. Mr. Yearling runs about 400 head of cattle, has about nine claims valued at \$1,500, each cutting about 1,500 tons of hay. From here we return to Mr. Erickson's. From here to the Steadman ranch, ten miles south of Kennedy, situated on the head of Wannaduce creek. This is a beautiful hay country. Mr. Steadman cuts about 2,000 tons of hay; summers about 3,000 head of cattle.

# Union



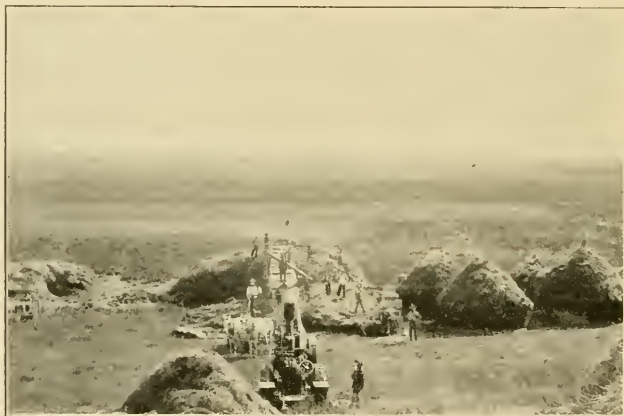
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On the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad "THE SCENIC LINE OF THE WORLD."



IN 1858 the Pike's Peak gold excitement caused a rush from the East to Colorado, and a camp was pitched at the Junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte River, which shortly after was christened Auraria. From this small beginning sprang Denver, the "Queen City of the Plains." This beautiful metropolis of Colorado is the first point of interest to the tourist from the East.

The stretch of two hundred miles of snow-capped mountains to the west gives the visitor who intends to cross the range a foretaste

health resort, and its fame as a sanitarium is widespread and thoroughly deserved.

Manitou is but five miles distant from Colorado Springs, being connected by both railroad and electric lines. Of all nature's lovely spots, few equal and none surpass in beauty of location, grandeur of surroundings and sublimity of scenery this veritable "gem of the Rockies." As a pleasure resort, it presents to the tourist more objects of scenic interest than any resort of a like character in the Old or New World, while its wonderful effervescent and mineral springs—soda and iron—make it the favorite resting-place



MARSHALL PASS

of the scenes to come on this never-to-be-forgotten trip. Leaving Denver on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, the mountains are gradually approached until Palmer Lake is reached. This beautiful sheet of water is located about midway between Denver and Pueblo, upon what is called "The Divide."

The delightful little city of Colorado Springs is next approached. This is essentially a city of homes, where the families of many of the most influential business men of the state reside. It was laid out as a

for invalids. Manitou is situated immediately at the foot of Pike's Peak, the summit of which may be attained on foot, on horseback, or by rail. The last named, "the cog wheel route," is, of course, the most popular. Two round trips a day being made during the summer months.

Returning to Colorado Springs and continuing southward, Pueblo is next reached. This is the second city of Colorado, and is noted for its great iron and steel industry, as well as its important smelters for the ore

which is brought down from the mountains. Every tourist should make it a point to stop off and inspect these works, which have given to Pueblo the name of the "Pittsburg of the West."

At Pueblo a turn to the westward is made, and in a short time the thriving commercial town of Florence appears, with its numerous derricks, this being the great oil region of Colorado.

A few miles further on is Cañon City, situated at the eastern end of the Grand Cañon of the Arkansas. From this point a direct connection is made for the great gold-mining region of Cripple Creek.

Just beyond Cañon City the railroad enters the Grand Cañon of the Arkansas, the narrowest portion of which is known as the Royal Gorge. When first examined it seemed impossible that a railway could ever be constructed through this stupendous cañon to Leadville and the West. There was scarcely room for the river alone, and granite ledges blocked the path with their mighty bulk. In time, however, these obstructions were blasted away, and to-day the cañon is a well-used thoroughfare. But its grandeur still remains. After entering its depths, the train moves slowly along the side of the Arkansas and around projecting shoulders of dark-hued granite, deeper and deeper into the heart of the range. The crested crags grow higher, the river madly foams along its rocky bed, anon the way becomes a mere fissure through the heights. Far above the road the sky forms a deep blue arch of light; but in the gorge hang dark and somber shades

which the sun's rays have never penetrated. Here the granite cliffs are one thousand feet high, smooth and unbroken by tree or shrub, and there a pinnacle soars skyward for thrice that distance. No flowers grow, and the birds care not to penetrate the solitude. The river, somber and swift, breaks the awful stillness with its roar.

Soon the cleft becomes still more narrow, the treeless cliffs higher, the river closer confined, and, where a long iron bridge hangs suspended from the smooth walls, the grandest portion of the cañon is reached. Escaping from the gorge, the narrow valley of the upper Arkansas is traversed, with the striking serrated peaks of the Sangre de Cristo close at hand on the west, until Salida is reached.

From this point the tourist can continue westward over Marshall Pass or northwesterly toward Leadville, which is one of the most interesting cities in the world to the tourist. It is the highest in the United States, its elevation being 10,200 feet above sea level. Here will be found the best opportunity for visiting some of the mines that have made Colorado famous.

Leaving Leadville, the ascent of Tennessee Pass is made and soon Eagle River Cañon is entered. Nowhere can the traveler find a more interesting and instructive illustration of mine methods than is here presented by the shaft-scarred sides of Battle Mountain and the pinnacle-perched eyries of Eagle River Cañon.

The cañon of the Grand River is approached through the Valley of the Eagle.

Gradually the valley narrows, high bluffs hem us in on the left, the river is close to the track on the right, and its fertile banks suddenly change into a tumbled, twisted, black, and blasted expanse of scoria. The few trees on the hither side of the stream are also black, an inheritance of fire, the waters under the black banks and reflecting the blackened trees, take on a swarthy hue—a Stygian picture! Just beyond, a distant glimpse of fertile country, and the clear waters of



EAGLE RIVER  
CAÑON



the Eagle are lost in the muddy current of the Grand and a cañon greater in extent and more varied in character than that of the Arkansas opens before us. Suggestions of the sphinx and of the pyramids can be caught in the severe and gigantic rock-piled structures on every hand. These are not made up of boulders, nor are they solid monoliths, like those in the Royal Gorge. On the contrary, they are columns, bastions, buttresses, walls, pyramids, towers, turrets, even statues of stratified stone, with sharp cleavage, not in the least weather-worn, presenting the appearance of Brobdignagian masonry. But we leave Egypt, with her shades of gray and her frowning, massive and gigantic forms. We are in a region of glowing colors, where the vermilion, the maroon, the green and the yellow abound and mingle and contrast. What strange country was the prototype of this? Ah! yonder is something characteristic—a terraced pyramid bounded with brilliant and varied colors—the teocali of the Aztecs. Whirling around a headland of glowing red rock, which it seems ought to be called "Flamingo Point," we are in a region of ruddy color and of graceful forms. Minarets, spires, towers, columns, airy pinnacles, infinite in variety, innumerable, indescribable.

We now arrive at Glenwood Springs, which is the county-seat of Garfield County, and is situated at the junction of the Grand and Roaring Fork Rivers. Here the tourist finds himself in a valley or park, fully 5,000 feet above sea-level, protected on every side by lofty mountains, which holds within its limits a series of hot sulphur springs bursting out of the mountain rocks and forming lakes of large proportions, making natural bathing places which, by artificial means have been rendered very convenient for the use of man.

Leaving Glenwood Springs and continuing westward along the ever-widening Grand River, the city of Grand Junction is soon reached. This is the point at which the standard and narrow-gauge lines of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad meet. Leaving Grand Junction, the richly colored Book Cliffs come into view, while away to the southward the snowy groups of the Sierra la Sal and San Rafael glisten in the distance. Between them may be distinguished the broken walls which mark the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, scarcely fifty miles away.

Space will not permit mention of all the many points of interest to be seen before Salt Lake City is reached. This, the interesting city by the great salt sea, is in a veritable garden. Low and picturesque adobe houses harmonize in their cool, quiet tones

with the extensive orchards of fruit and gardens of flowers which surround them, and the business blocks in the center of the city are imposing and strong. Back upon a "bench," and several hundred feet above the city, is Fort Douglas, the flag of the republic standing out in bright relief against the Wasatch. Strong and rapid mountain streams come rushing through the cañons and are led into the city where the clear, cold, limpid waters sing a pleasant song as they sport and play along the sides of the streets, where they are conducted through the entire city. The great object of interest to the tourist and stranger is Temple Square: here are situated the great ecclesiastical buildings of the Mormon Church.

The return trip from Salt Lake City may be made through Gunnison and toward the world-famed Marshall Pass. Gradually the view becomes less obstructed by mountain sides, and the eye roams over miles of cone-shaped summits. The timberless tops of towering ranges show that one is among the heights, in a region familiar with the clouds. Slowly the steepes are conquered, until at last the train halts upon the summit of Marshall Pass. A halt of ten minutes or so gives an opportunity to ascend to the observatory constructed above the station, which elevation commands a view of both Atlantic and Pacific Slopes, one of the most inspiring views on the continent.



THE ROYAL  
GORGE



# Union Stock Yards

December 31st, 1900, closed the seventeenth year's business of the Union Stock Yards Company of Omaha, and where, in the spring of 1884, was simply a cluster of farms, has been built up one of the best appointed and most commodious stock yards, five mammoth packing houses and several smaller enterprises, through which employment is given to a large number of people, created a town which, starting as a village, has grown into a thriving city of over 25,000 inhabitants, all of whom, directly or indirectly, derive their income from these industries, which have grown in importance until ranking third in the list of packing centers of the world. With a natural location unequalled by any other point in this country as central for receiving live stock, or the raw material, and as a distributing point for both the product of this industry and for feeders to the great corn belt of the central west, it enjoys facilities not found elsewhere, and which have been the secret of its rapid strides into prominence. Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri, the four leading corn-producing states of the west, surround this common center and find a market here for their finished stock, while it is at the same time the nearest great market to the ranges of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, the Dakotas, Montana, Oregon, Idaho and Indian Territory, which furnish yearly almost unlimited supplies of both cattle and sheep to be slaughtered here. These four great corn feeding states all look to this market for their supplies of feeding cattle, which are furnished to them for feeding purposes in unlimited quantities by the great western and northwestern ranges.

The present capacity of the yards is estimated at 620 cars of cattle, 15,000 head; 375 cars of hogs, 25,000 head; 70 double decks of sheep, 15,000 head; and 50 cars of horses, 1,000 head. Fully eighty acres are now covered with pens, barns, sheds and other buildings requisite for carrying on the business, while fully twenty acres more are graded and being covered rapidly with pens and sheds. The whole is surrounded by a network of tracks and switches, which tracks are owned by the stock yards company, who, with their own locomotives and train crews, handle all of the stock, both coming in and going out, as well as all of the stock yards and packing house supplies and product, which insures the most careful and satisfactory service. While the handling of cattle and hogs was receiving so much attention, the development of the sheep industry was not overlooked, and the completion of a sheep barn and dipping plant have increased the business 300 per cent, and added a large amount of territory to that already acquired. The barn accommodates 15,000 sheep, is a mammoth fire-proof structure covering 50,000 square feet where, under one roof, are scales, sorting pens, complete feed station and everything necessary to the rapid transaction of business. The supply of water for the use of both the yards and packing houses is furnished from the city mains, is always adequate, and as is well known, being taken from the Missouri river, cannot be excelled. Every pen is supplied with a trough and hydrant, so that under no circumstances is stock at any time obliged to either be moved or go without. Careful attention has been paid to the sewerage and drainage, resulting in as perfect and complete a system as is known anywhere in the country. No charge whatever is made for the use of the yards, and one charge for weighing, usually called yardage, covers the whole cost to the shipper, no matter how long his stock may remain on the market, and the weighing charge is only collected when stock is sold, so that if it is shipped from this market to some other by him, the only expense to be incurred here is for such an amount of feed as may be given to the stock by his orders.

Starting in 1884 and 1885 with a small frame plant built for The G. H. Hammond Company by the stock yards company the packing industries have steadily grown in size, completeness and in the number of products manufactured until at the close of 1900 there were five complete plants in operation, the Cudahy Packing Company, Swift and Company, The Hammond Packing Company, the Omaha Packing Company and Armour & Company. These five packing houses are as finely equipped as any in the country and are making yearly additions as the increase of their business demands. With an aggregate slaughtering capacity of 10,000 cattle, 25,000 hogs and 8,000 sheep per day, which gives employment to 7,500 men, these five houses turn out an enormous product, going to all parts of the world and taking a large territory to furnish them supplies, but good prices and the best of facilities for handling all stock received is constantly opening up new territory, all finding a home market much more advantageous to ship to.

The horse and mule department is rapidly forging to the front as one of the principal features of the market, the business for 1900 being one hundred per cent greater than for the preceding year. Handsome brick barns, well ventilated and lighted, have been erected, and one of the finest pavilions in the country for the accommodation of all those attending sales, of which three are held weekly, are among its attractions. There are numerous buyers from the east, north and south constantly on the market, and prices realized have been fully up to the best paid at more eastern or southern markets.

The commission men are as follows:

Geo. Adams & Burke Co.  
N. E. Acker & Co.  
Joseph Bliss,  
Brainard, Richardson & Carpenter.  
Byers Brothers & Co.  
George Burke Co.  
F. Chittenden & Co.  
Clay, Robinson & Co.  
Clifton Com. Co.  
Cooper Com. Co.  
Cox, Jones Com. Co.  
W. F. Denny & Co.  
Allen Dudley & Co.  
Evans-Snyder-Buel Co.  
Flato Commission Co.

Garrow & Laverty Bros.  
Gillehrest, Hanna & Co.  
Sam Gosney L. S. Com. Co.  
Geo. B. Green,  
Hulsman & Dille,  
Ingwersen Brothers,  
Jackson, Higgins & Co.  
Kelly Com. Co.  
Knollin & Booth,  
Mallory Com. Co.  
Martin Bros. & Co.  
McCloud-Love Live Stock Com. Co.  
A. A. Nixon,  
Nye & Buchanan Co.

Paddock, Cotner & Lattin.  
Parkhurst & Hopper.  
T. D. Perrine & Co.  
W. J. Perry L. S. Com. Co.  
Ralston & Fonda.  
Roberts Bros.  
L. E. Roberts & Co.  
Rosenbaum Bros. & Co.  
Shelly & Rogers.  
Draper Smith.  
Thuet Bros.  
A. Waggoner & Co.  
Williams & Sons.  
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